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"A BAND OF KIOWAS DASHED FROM THEIR HIDING-PLACE AND OPENED THE ATTACK"

—Page 188

WAR-PAINT *and* POWDER-HORN

By VERNON QUINN

Author of "The Exciting Adventures of Captain John Smith," etc.

With Frontispiece in Color by
H. C. MURPHY
and Three Illustrations by
LOUIS G. SCHROEDER

FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY
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To

SUE QUINN POBST

whose pioneer ancestors, with powder-horns and muskets, blazed many a trail, opening up the frontier for settlers who followed. From their dauntless exploits came, perhaps, some of her own fine spirit of courage, of great-heartedness, and unquenchable optimism.

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FOREWORD

THIS is the story of the Old Santa Fé Trail—of perilous days, with Indians growing ever more hostile; of wakeful nights, when traders grimly stood vigil, waiting for the dawn, listening for the shrill war-cry that would announce yet another stirring fight.

Santa Fé gold!

In the days when St. Louis was the Far West, when Kansas was a wild country peopled by roving bands of Indians, and the Rockies had scarcely been seen by white men, the magic of those words—Santa Fé gold!—called alluringly to the merchants of St. Louis. Undaunted by hardships, by dangers on every hand, the rugged frontier traders blazed a trail, across wild prairies and wilder mountains, from the Missouri to Santa Fé. They carried merchandise, and brought back the coveted gold, and bags of silver bullion.

It was traders who opened the Trail, seeking for the rainbow's end. But no sooner had the pot of gold been reached than others set out. The Trail saw a procession, reaching down the

years, of traders, hunters, trappers, scouts, soldiers, emigrants. Many of these old frontiersmen left records, day-by-day diaries, of their exciting adventures on the Santa Fé Trail; and it is from these original, first-hand accounts that the story of the Trail has been woven.

It covers one of the most colorful periods in frontier history.

It is a far cry from Santa Fé to Florida, a long step backward from 1822 to 1528. Yet the story of the Trail—which extended from the Missouri to Santa Fé—had its real beginning on Florida's sunny beaches.

WAR-PAINT AND POWDER-HORN

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Diamond Spring
Council Grove
Walnut Cr
Fort Zarah
Pawnee Rock
Ash Cr
Pawnee Forks
Fort Larned
Fort Dodge
The Caches
R. R.
Hann's Fort
Cow Cr
Bent's Fort
Fort Lyon
AND SANTA FE
Arkansas
River
Chateau's Island
TOPEKA
Sand Cr
Cimarron Crossing
Cimarron
River
Arkansas
River
Pueblo
La Junta
ATCHISON
Purgatoire River
Raton Pass
Canadian Canyon
Taos
SANTA FE
Fort Union
Las Vegas
Anaches
San Miguel
Point of Rocks
Canadian
River
Washita
River
INDIAN TERRITORY
MEXICO

CHAPTER I

WHEN PIKE WAS A PRISONER

CORTÉS, the victorious, had been in Mexico only eight years when Narvaez decided to cover himself with glory by conquering Florida. Sailing up the Gulf coast he landed his soldiers on a palm-fringed beach and haughtily dismissed the ships. They were ordered to meet him farther north; he and his colorful army would march through the jungle, conquering and gathering in gold as they went.

The Florida Indians, amazed at the display, crowded round to stare and admire. They were friendly enough until Narvaez, disappointed at finding no gold, began an orgy of torture and mutilation that brought quick revenge. Their fierce attacks sent the Spaniards scurrying to the coast, where they pitched in feverishly to build boats to carry them away from this land of death.

The crude vessels, setting out upon the Gulf in September of the same year, met disaster in the first storm. The boat carrying Narvaez

went to the bottom at once, with all on board; the other vessels did not last much longer.

Of all Narvaez's brave and foolish army, only four men escaped. They had been lost in the jungle when the boats set out, and so were saved the fate of the others.

Led by the indomitable Cabeza de Vaca, these men spent eight terrible years making their way from Florida, around the Gulf coast, to Mexico, where the Spaniards were then well established. After all their trials, their years of Indian slavery, of being sold from tribe to tribe, of escapes, starvation, untold hardship, they stumbled into Mexico City in 1536, to find themselves heroes. For they had come from the Beyond! From far north of the most northerly outpost of New Spain. Conquistadores in Mexico crowded round them eagerly. Were the tribes in the north warlike, had they gold, could they be conquered?

It so happened that Mendoza, Viceroy of Mexico, was greatly worried at just that time. The King of Spain, voracious for gold, was demanding from him more and ever more treasure; while the Pope's coffers, yawning for the wealth of this new land, were seemingly bottomless. Either Mendoza must somehow increase

the supply or he would be replaced. The mines were now being worked to their uttermost. There seemed but one thing to do—conquer more territory where new mines might be discovered and more Indians enslaved to work them. But the conquistadores were no longer interested in exploration. They were living too luxuriously in the city of the Montezumas to be willing to subject themselves again to the hardships and dangers of the trail.

In some way Mendoza would have to arouse their interest, their cupidity.

And then came Cabeza de Vaca and his three companions from the Beyond. The Viceroy was quick to form his scheme and at once put it into execution. De Vaca was far too truthful to be used; but there was Fray Marcos de Niza, a jolly Franciscan friar, with the liveliest of imaginations and the most plausible of tongues.

Fray Marcos was promptly dispatched to the north—with a hint from Mendoza as to the nature of the report he should give on his return. Such an errand was hugely to the liking of the good friar; and when he had traveled as far as Zuñi, and had seen, shining gold in the sun, a pueblo with terraced houses of baked clay, this was quite enough for him. He sped back to

Mexico and spread abroad his report. He had discovered the long-sought, long-dreamed-of Seven Cities of Cíbola! The Seven Cities that, as every one knew, were built entirely of gold.

As the tale ran quickly from mouth to mouth, the marvelous wealth of Cíbola grew—the houses were built of gold, the streets paved with nuggets hauled there by the cartload; the Indians were dressed in jewels that flashed till the eye was dazzled and could not look upon them.

As the clever Mendoza expected, a fever of gold-madness swept the colony, and old and young grew wild for conquest. There was no talk, no thought, but of the glittering treasure of the Seven Cities of Cíbola.

Of all the conquistadores who set forth in search of the wealth of the north, the most famous was Francisco de Coronado. With a large following of infantry, their lances gleaming in the sun, with more than two hundred and fifty horsemen, both horses and men adorned with waving plumes and glittering armor; with droves of livestock for food, and many Indians for slaves, Coronado set out from the capital in 1540, sweeping north across mountains and burning plains. Following the route of Fray Marcos, the spectacular army came to Zuñi—

and found only a village of mud. Disgusted at the lies Fray Marcos had told, but believing that somewhere in this country the Seven Cities might be found, Coronado swept grandly on, dividing his army into three parts in order to cover more territory. One division, going northwest, discovered the Grand Canyon; while another, turning northeastward, came to the little Pueblo Indian village of Taguey—which, more than a half-century later, became Santa Fé.

While gold may have been scarce, and the Seven Cities were wholly illusionary, there was no lack of other interests in this new land.

"They had there," marvels one of the conquistadores, "hailestones as bigge as oranges (which caused them feare and teares). And in these partes are certaine beastes almost as bigge as horses, they have very greate hornes, and they beare wooll like vnto sheepe." Even the American bison, unlike anything they had ever seen, filled them wholly with wonder: "They have abundance of oxen verie monstrous, being camel-backed, and having long beards, and on their necke long manes like vnto horses. There be dogges so bigge, that one of them alone will hold a bull, though he be never so wilde."

After Coronado's failure to find the fabulous

Cíbola, or gold of any consequence, the territory that is now New Mexico was almost forgotten for more than a half-century. Then, in 1598, the renowned Captain Juan de Oñate led an army of four hundred up the valley of the Rio Grande, subduing and massacring as he went. Bearing a commission as governor of the province, he settled in one of the pueblos, which he rebuilt for the purpose; and about 1605 he began the rebuilding of Taguey, which he named grandiosely *La Ciudad Real de la Santa Fé de San Francisco*—"The Royal City of the Holy Faith of St. Francis." Two centuries were to pass before this city, important as the gateway to the south and the west, became the reason for the Santa Fé Trail.

The seventeenth century slipped by, and the eighteenth, with Santa Fé growing in strength and importance, and the colony spreading out until the surrounding pueblos were rapidly changed into Spanish settlements. The most important of these was Taos, about sixty miles north of Santa Fé. While the old, old pueblo, built in terraced houses of adobe, remained purely Indian, the Spanish town of Taos grew up beside it and became an important outfitting and trading center on the Old Santa Fé Trail.

By 1800 both Santa Fé and Taos had a large Spanish population. They had, too, an abundance of gold and silver, with scant opportunity to spend it; for they were shut off from the well-stocked American markets by miles of rugged mountains and vast plains peopled with hostile Indians. Merchandise reached them from New York by the most roundabout way of Vera Cruz, having then to be hauled up, hundreds of miles, over Mexico's mountains and deserts to these far Mexican outposts of Santa Fé and Taos.

In 1792 three Mexicans had attempted to blaze a trail to the Missouri, and they did eventually reach St. Louis, but their experiences had been too unpleasant to lure others into following in their footsteps. On the Arkansas River they were captured by a band of Kaw Indians, who "took our horses and all our possessions and cut our clothes which we wore, with knives, thus leaving us naked. They were of a mind to kill us, whereupon some of them cried out to those who were about to do it not to kill us with guns or arrows because of the great risk that would be run of killing one another, as they surrounded us; but that if they killed us it should be by hatchet-blows or spears."

These three Mexicans were not the first white

men to travel the route that later became the Santa Fé Trail, for a trader had gone down from the Missouri about thirty years previously, but they were the first to leave a report of their travels. Twelve years later, in 1804, an American, an enterprising merchant of Kaskaskia, Illinois, got together a pack, and hired a Creole, Baptiste La Lande, to take it through.

La Lande had been working for the fur companies: he was accustomed to the wilderness and to dealing with Indians; he had no difficulty in reaching Santa Fé, where he readily sold the merchant's ware at exorbitant prices. Then, enjoying the unique experience of having so much gold and silver in his possession, he remained in the picturesque Spanish-Indian town, and the Kaskaskia merchant saw him no more.

The following year a young Kentuckian, James Pursley, arrived in Santa Fé, after three adventure-filled years of wandering with the Indians.

Young Pursley and two companions had set out from St. Louis in 1802 on a hunting trip, planning to cross the prairie leisurely to the Arkansas River and descend it and the Mississippi to New Orleans. The Kaw Indians were at peace with the whites, but they were known to

be such thieves that for several nights the men watched carefully for these rovers of the plains. Then one night, far out on the prairie, the three hunters grew careless. And in the morning they had neither horses nor packs, for the Kaws had crept up in the darkness and stolen everything. Stranded, they could only decide to make their way back to St. Louis as best they could and secure new outfits.

As they were turning back, disappointed at this ending to all their fine plans, a French trader happened along. He was on his way to the Mandan Indians, on the upper Missouri, and young Pursley eagerly joined him; the two others, supplied by the trader with food and a rifle, returned to St. Louis.

For three years the carefree Kentucky lad, out for adventure, lived with the Mandans, gaining in their fights with the Sioux such a reputation for daredeviltry and valor that he was made a chieftain. When he and his two thousand warriors were not off on a Sioux scalping party, he led the braves on long hunting or trading expeditions. And it was on one of these that he crossed the boundary from the United States into New Mexico, in 1805. Halting his band, he rode forward with an escort of two

Indians to see whether his large following would be permitted to come peacefully to the Spanish settlement to trade.

It was June in Santa Fé when he rode into the town, and he found it far too delectable a place to leave. The two Indians were sent back with the message of welcome; but when Pursley's braves had completed their trading and turned northward, he had said farewell to them and settled down in Santa Fé. He had made a good deal of money at his old trade as a carpenter when, two years later, the next American arrived from the north.

This was Dr. John Robinson. He came as a spy and was followed shortly by his friend, Captain Zebulon Montgomery Pike, with six ragged soldiers, all marched in as suspected spies.

The preceding year the American Government had redeemed fifty Osage Indians from the Pottawatomies; and in July, 1806, Captain Pike was sent from St. Louis to return these Osages to their tribe and at the same time explore the country, especially that part of it which lay along the boundary between the United States and Mexico. Accompanying him as he set out, and traveling with him as far as the Rio Grande,

was his friend Dr. Robinson, bound for New Mexico on a secret mission.

It was on this journey that Captain Pike discovered Pike's Peak; and when, months later, he found himself on the Arkansas River and the snows prevented further progress of his horses, he built a small stockade, where he left the animals and most of his baggage in charge of his interpreter and a soldier, while with the remainder of his men he struck off across the unknown territory, through the deep snows, on foot.

It was a terrible journey. All suffered intensely from the cold and many times from danger of starvation. Soon two of the men had to be left behind with frozen feet, while two others were scarcely able to limp along on improvised crutches. But nothing could daunt Captain Pike, no hardships prevent him from carrying out his orders. He had been sent to make a report on the land along the Mexican border—and undoubtedly he had secret orders to cross into New Mexico and gain any information there that would be of interest to the United States.

At last, he came to a large river, which he claims he believed to be the Red, and here, it

being late January, he decided to encamp till the snows were over and he could send back for his horses and baggage. Descending the river—it was the Rio Grande—to reach timber, he crossed it (thus knowingly crossing the boundary even had it been the Red) and followed up a branch until he came to a good site for his camp. Here he set to work, determined to build so strong a stockade that four or five of his men might hold it against "the insolence, cupidity and barbarity of the savages, while the others returned to assist the poor fellows who had been left behind." It was no flimsy structure he would erect. Measuring off a large square, with the unfordable river for one side, he began the construction of the walls on the other three sides.

"Heavy cottonwood logs about two feet in diameter were laid up all round about six feet, after which lighter ones, until we made it twelve feet in height. We then dug a small ditch on the inside all round, making it perpendicular on the internal side and sloping next the work. In this ditch we planted small stakes, about six inches in diameter, sharpened at the upper end to a nice point, and slanted them over the top of the work, giving them about two and a half feet projection. Lastly we dug a ditch round the

whole, four feet wide, and let the water in all round. The earth taken out being thrown against the work, formed an excellent rampart against small-arms, three or four feet high. Our mode of getting in was to crawl over the ditch on a plank and into a small hole sunk below the level of the work near the river for that purpose. Our portholes were pierced about eight feet from the ground, and a platform was prepared to shoot from."

Pike had with him now eight soldiers—after sending two back to get the two he had left with frozen feet—and his friend Dr. Robinson.

This eminent American, who had accompanied Pike's expedition so far, had set out for New Mexico to get certain information for his Government. In brief words, he was a spy. To allay suspicion, he decided to use the Kaskaskia merchant's claim: he would pretend that he had come to collect the money stolen by the Creole, La Lande. Leaving Pike now, he set out alone, a daring trip across snow-covered and unknown mountains, to Santa Fé, hoping to return before the soldiers had left the stockade.

When he reached Santa Fé, he went at once to Governor Allencaster, to explain his presence in New Mexico and ask the Governor's aid in

collecting the stolen money. Fortunately, La Lande was now penniless.

"He shall raise the sum," said Governor Allencaster.

"Then I shall have to remain until he does so," said Robinson, secretly delighted, "for I must not return without it."

While Robinson's tale sounded plausible, the Governor was not convinced that so fine a gentleman could be merely a collector for some Yankee merchant. He suspected the American might have other reasons for being there; and lest he learn too much about conditions in Santa Fé, the capital, he was promptly taken to a village several miles away.

This was playing into Robinson's hands; it enabled him to see more of the land; and as a physician he was able to mingle with the people, entering the homes of high and low alike. In fact, after a few months he was ready to leave New Mexico, hoping that somewhere he might rejoin Captain Pike, wondering what had been the fate of his friend, an army officer who had boldly built a fortification on foreign soil. All these weeks the American doctor had been kept far south of Sante Fé, and knew nothing of Pike's whereabouts.

And what had happened to Captain Pike?

Only a few days after Robinson had left the stockade, back in February, Pike was out hunting when two spies from Santa Fé rode up. Pretending to believe they were merely a couple of passing Spaniards, Captain Pike entertained them for the night, seeing to it that they would have a fine report to carry to their superiors, for the one thing he wanted was to be taken to Santa Fé.

Two weeks later, to his pretended surprise, a Spanish officer appeared, with fifty dragoons and fifty "mounted militia armed with lances, escopates and pistols." And it was soon made clear that Pike and his men were to be taken into Santa Fé to explain to the Governor, if they could, why American soldiers had strongly entrenched themselves on Mexican ground.

Pike readily agreed to go; but he insisted that two of his men remain at the stockade to await the return of those who had been left behind. A strong detachment of Spanish soldiers was left to bring all of these in as prisoners, while the remaining dragoons and militia escorted Pike and six of his soldiers to the quaint New Mexican capital.

At one village where they stopped for the

night, the Creole La Lande appeared at their quarters. He had come as a spy from the Governor, to pretend that he also was a prisoner of the Spaniards, hoping that thus he might learn why the Americans had entered New Spain. Pike saw through the ruse at once.

"I ordered my men to shut and fasten the door," he says. "I then told him that I believed him to be an emissary sent on purpose to endeavor to betray us; that all men of that description were scoundrels, and never should escape punishment whilst I had the power to chastise them—immediately ordering my men to seize him and cautioning him at the same time that if he cried out, or made the least resistance, I would be obliged to make use of the saber which I had in my hand."

This so alarmed the fellow that he hastened back to tell Governor Allencaster that Pike was a great man, none less, indeed, than the "Governor of the Territory of the Illinois."

On the following evening, March 3, 1807, Pike rode into the sprawling little adobe town of Santa Fé, and was taken at once to the Governor's palace, "the floors of which were covered with skins of buffalo, bear, or some other animal." The Governor began at once to ques-

tion the ragged and weather-worn young man he saw before him.

"You come to reconnoiter our country, do you?"

"I marched to reconnoiter our own," said Pike.

"In what character are you?"

Pike looked with chagrin at his ragged trousers and his torn and soiled coat, but he answered proudly: "In my proper character, an officer of the United States Army."

"And this Robinson—he is attached to your party?"

"No!" Pike knew that Robinson was under suspicion, and matters would be worse if it were known he had entered New Mexico with the soldiers. Yet Captain Pike felt that he was telling the strict truth, for Robinson was not actually a part of his party, but was merely traveling with it.

"Do you know him?" the Governor asked abruptly.

"Yes. I met him in St. Louis."

"How many men have you?"

"Fifteen."

"And this Robinson makes sixteen," said the Governor.

Pike straightened himself up and spoke coldly:

"I have already told your Excellency that he does not belong to my party and I shall answer no more interrogatories on that subject!"

It was difficult for Captain Pike to look as haughty as he felt, for he had arrived in Santa Fé clad more like a scarecrow than an officer of the American army. Mexicans gaping at him and his ragged men had even asked whether Americans lived in houses as the Spaniards did, or wandered about like Indians.

At the time they had left the horses, to set out afoot on their difficult and dangerous march across to the Rio Grande del Norte, they had had to pack everything on their backs, and so they had taken only what they considered vitally necessary. "The ammunition claimed our first care," Pike says; "tools were secondary; leather, leggings, boots, and mockinsons were the next in consideration. Consequently I left all my uniform, clothing, trunks, etc., as did the men except what they had on their backs; conceiving that which would secure the feet and legs from cold to be preferable to any less indispensable portion of our dress. Thus, when we presented ourselves at Santa Fé I was dressed in a pair of

blue trousers, mockinsons, blanket coat, and a cap made of scarlet cloth lined with fox-skin; my poor fellows were in leggings, breech cloths and leather coats, and there was not a hat in the whole party."

The Governor, uncertain as to what he should do with this ragged but apparently important prisoner, decided to send him on to Chihuahua for trial, and thus be free from all responsibility himself. And so, shortly afterward Pike and his men, accompanied by an imposing escort of dragoons, set out for the larger city to the south. At a village where they stopped one night along the way, Pike was overjoyed to find Dr. Robinson, and to learn that he was to join them. A few months later, after the unwinding of much red tape at Chihuahua, they were escorted in a roundabout way to the American frontier, where they were "grateful and happy" to be once more free.

It was Captain Pike's stirring report of trade conditions in New Mexico, especially of the abundance of gold and silver and the eagerness of the Spaniards to spend it for comforts and luxuries, that awakened the first real interest in a trail to Santa Fé. Merchants and traders of St. Louis and other frontier towns were

fired with a desire to enrich themselves in this new field. A wild country lay between them and the land of gold and silver. There were merciless plains, treacherous rivers, difficult mountains, to be traversed—to say nothing of the dangers there might be from hostile savages and ravenous beasts. But what were these to the daring Americans of the pioneer West!

Pike's report aroused the traders. They began collecting their merchandise, choosing their pack-animals, looking to their pistols and rifles and bowie-knives—getting in readiness to break the trail to Santa Fé.

CHAPTER II

THE LOST TRAPPERS

THE story of Ezekiel Williams and his two comrades, Workman and Spencer, is indirectly connected with the Santa Fé Trail, as two of these resourceful trappers eventually landed in Santa Fé, and many years later figured dramatically in the history of the Trail. The story is questioned by some, ridiculed by others, but old-timers declare it true.

When Lewis and Clark were ready to return from their famous trip, they persuaded Big White, chief of the Mandans, to go with them to Washington to see the white man's Chief. Big White hesitated, for his tribe was at war with the Sioux, through whose land they must journey; he would be safe on the outward trip, with the white men, but how about returning? Lewis promised to supply him an escort through the dangerous territory, and deliver him, his wife and son safely back at Fort Mandan.

And so, when Big White returned from Washington, a guard of twenty men all of them

trappers, commanded by Captain Ezekiel Williams, set out from St. Louis on April 25, 1807, to see that he got back to his people. Big White was in no haste, so the men planned to trap as they went. Each of the twenty was supplied with a rifle and a pistol, and had a pack-horse carrying extra powder and lead, an ax, a knife, blankets, six traps, and various presents for the Indians.

Without mishap they reached Fort Mandan, and delivered Big White, his wife and son safely to his people. Williams and his men then spent the remainder of the summer trapping in that region, and when the snows came settled down in the fort for the winter. In the spring there were only ten to set out with their traps; some had been killed by the Indians, some decided to remain at the fort. With misfortune dogging their every step, the trappers came at last to the headwaters of a large river. That very night they were attacked by the Indians, all their horses stolen and, one by one, the trappers killed until only three remained: Williams, Workman and Spencer. When the Indians gave them a little respite, these three held a hasty council.

"We can't go on," said Williams. "We'll

have to cache our furs an' traps an' go back to St. Louis."

But where were they? What river was this? How could they get to St. Louis? They knew they were lost, hundreds of miles off in a wilderness, where no white man had been, where roving Indians, having killed their comrades, were eager for the lives of these three.

"This is the Red River," decided Ezekiel Williams. (It was not the Red, but the Arkansas, which ran for many miles beside the Santa Fé Trail.) "We need only follow it down."

"And meet the Sioux and Missouris and other blood-thirsty Injuns!" said Workman. "We'll go south to Santa Fé. That can't be as far as St. Louis."

Williams was a stubborn man, and as captain of the expedition he was accustomed to giving orders and being obeyed without argument. But Spencer sided with Workman. Those two were as determined to go to Santa Fé as Williams was to return to St. Louis. And so, neither side giving in, these three men alone in the wilderness, so dependent upon one another for protection, separated. Workman and Spencer ascended the river, then struck off in the direction they be-

lieved Santa Fé lay, knowing that they must cover at least a few hundred miles before they would again see a white man. What dangers might be met, in the wholly unknown region, what hostile tribes encountered, was of small moment to them: come what might, they were determined to reach Santa Fé.

Captain Williams, now all alone, realized the peril of lingering where the Indians might return at any moment. He hastily constructed a canoe of buffalo-hides, for there was no timber sufficiently large for this purpose even if he had had the time: the headwaters of the Arkansas River wander through an almost treeless plain. Taking six or eight traps—for he had set out to trap and no small predicament like this was to prevent him—he launched his strange bark in what he was convinced was the Red River. He did not know just where the Red River would take him—perhaps even to the Pacific; but he felt pretty certain that along the way he could trap beaver.

Floating down the river, he soon came to banks lined with willows and cottonwoods, and here he stopped long enough to build a more substantial canoe. In this he set out, traveling only at night, when the darkness would shield

him, hiding by day in the willows along the bank. Whenever he reached a beaver-haunt he would tie up to the willows and remain in one place as many days as it was necessary to get all the pelts. His traps would be set at nightfall, and emptied at dawn. When there were no more beavers in that spot he would then, with the coming of darkness, glide downstream to the next haunt.

Food was a difficult problem. On the plains he could see vast herds of buffalo; and antelope and smaller game came down to the river to drink; but he dared not use his rifle, for it would bring the lurking Indians upon him. He lived on beaver meat till he sickened of it. Once he snared a small deer and had a luxurious feast, then dried what remained of it by laying strips of the meat on the gunwale of his canoe, where the hot sun would pour down upon it and yet it would be out of reach of the ravenous prairie wolves.

Thus weeks passed; his stack of beaver-pelts grew; and as yet, by exercising the greatest caution, he had not been seen by a single Indian. His luck was to change, however.

As he set out at twilight one evening for his night journey, he rounded a bend in the river

and came abruptly upon a canoe containing three Indians of the Kaw tribe. He had now more than a hundred beaver-pelts and some of otter and other animals, besides his valuable rifle and ax. The Kaws were friendly to the whites, but they were notorious thieves, and Williams knew very well that these three would not easily let one lone trapper escape with such valuable cargo.

In their broken English they told the trapper that this was the Arkansas River, that they were on their way even then to a white man's fort which lay about five hundred miles downstream, and they would be delighted to have his company on their journey.

Williams knew too much about Indians to let their wily manner deceive him. They would, he knew, rob him at the first opportunity. He, too, pretended friendship, however; but he said he was in a great hurry, and began paddling as hard as he could. To his delight, he found himself drawing far ahead of them, and at last, when darkness had come and he felt that he was safe, he drew into the willows and concealed his canoe, that he might get a little sleep after his hard paddling, and at the same time lie hidden, so the Indians would pass him.

Scarcely had he stretched out in the bottom of the canoe and closed his eyes when he heard the Indians draw into the bank just above him. Williams always tied his canoe to a willow by a leather thong about twenty feet long, so that in an emergency he could cut the thong and glide noiselessly downstream in the darkness.

This he did now, making no sound till he was far out of hearing; then for two long hours he paddled as hard as he could, at last pulling into the willows again, hungry and utterly exhausted. Jumping ashore, he lighted a small fire, to cook a beaver-tail; and scarcely had he done so when, to his astonishment, he heard the Indians draw into the bank just above him, but hidden from him by the willow scrub.

Building up his fire, that it might burn brightly and so deceive them into thinking he was preparing to cook his supper, he once more slipped noiselessly into his canoe and glided away with the current, drifting downstream for a half-hour in the pitch-darkness, listening intently for any sound of the pursuers and hearing nothing but the lisp of the wind in the willows. Breathing a sigh of thankfulness that he was safe at last, he nevertheless paddled as hard as his tired muscles would permit till well past

midnight and then once more swung into the trees, tied up his canoe and threw himself down to sleep.

Before he had closed his eyes, even, he heard the Indians pull into the shore just above him. Furious, he grabbed up his rifle, jumped ashore and, pushing aside the willows, strode up to them, guided by the fire they already were lighting.

The three Indians were extremely cordial. They invited Williams to sit down and partake of the venison they were about to roast.

"You thieving villains!" he stormed, remembering even in his fury that he must use the clipped English they could understand. "You now follow me three time! If you follow me again, I kill you!"

Turning his back upon them, he returned to his canoe, pushed noisily off from shore, and paddled the rest of the night. He had escaped at last.

But not for long. The three Kaws let him go because they knew that the very next morning he would come suddenly upon a large party of their tribe headed by a chief. Williams and his rich cargo fell into the hands of the Indians, and he was marched off to one of their villages.

While they were trying to decide what his fate should be, the Kaw tribe went to war with the Pawnees, taking their white prisoner to fight with them.

Ezekiel Williams loved nothing so much as a good fight; and moreover he had a few scores of his own to settle with the Pawnees. He fought so valiantly that he soon found himself at the head of a detachment of Kaw braves. He killed a number of Pawnees himself, and undoubtedly helped the Kaws win the day. Returning to the village, he found his position changed from prisoner to great warrior; the Kaw Indians wished to adopt him and make him their war-chief. But this he declined, asking only to be set free, that he might return to the whites at Fort Cooper on the Missouri. They reluctantly consented, giving him his rifle and enough ammunition to keep him from starving on the way. He said nothing about his stolen pelts, for he knew he could recover them when the Indians brought them to Fort Cooper to sell, and thus he would cleverly save himself the trouble of carrying them there.

With his rifle to supply him food, Ezekiel Williams came at last to the Missouri, thinking how foolish his two rash companions, Work-

man and Spencer, had been not to remain with him.

These two hardy trappers had made their way across the plain to the headwaters of a river which they believed to be the Rio Grande del Norte, which would take them directly down to Santa Fé. They launched their cottonwood canoe and, like Williams, traveled only at night, hiding by day. But soon the water began to get rough, and this made night traveling dangerous, for there was no telling when they might be swept into rapids or over cataracts. Cautiously, then, they began to travel by day, portaging around the impassable places. They were not, as they believed, on the Rio Grande, but on the Colorado, one of the most dangerous rivers in the world. Fortunately for them, Indians one night stole their canoe, so they were compelled to continue by land, there being no available timber for another boat. This, alone, probably saved their lives.

Following down beside the river for many weeks, keeping as near to the bank as they could, in the mountainous country they now had entered, they came one day to a trail where there was a decided crossing of the river and many horse and mule tracks led east. Jubilantly fol-

lowing this trail for two days, they met a caravan of forty or fifty Spaniards, on their way from Santa Fé to El Pueblo de los Angeles, in California.

The Spaniards told the two lost trappers that it was the Colorado River they had descended, and that Santa Fé lay far to the east.

"But you'll never reach there alive," they added. "The Comanches are on the war-path. Our party had trouble getting through. Two lone men would have no chance at all. You'd better come on to California with us, and return with us to Santa Fé in the spring."

Workman and Spencer, glad to have human companionship after the months in the wilds, readily accepted the invitation to join the caravan, hoping that in California they might find an opportunity to return to the United States. They spent the winter in and around Los Angeles, and in the spring again joined the caravan, which now had a herd of horses and mules to drive back to Santa Fé.

And so, at long last, the two trappers reached the New Mexican city, and, like many others, found it so delightful that they forgot their desire to return to St. Louis. They settled down in Santa Fé, and not until twenty years later did

they suddenly feel homesick, suddenly become afflicted with a longing to be again in the United States, to see once more their old friends in St. Louis. They promptly joined the annual trek along the Santa Fé Trail; and it was to be a memorable trip, a trip when the Comanches were indeed on the war-path, and Workman, by a heroic night ride, helped to save the caravan.

CHAPTER III

BLAZING THE TRAIL

IN 1813 three men, McKnight, Baird and Chambers, mounted on sturdy horses and leading pack-animals laden with goods, set out from St. Louis and with no real mishap rode into Santa Fé. But the Spanish authorities were very suspicious of their northern neighbors, and these three men were arrested as spies and their goods confiscated. They were sent to prison in Chihuahua; but many years later Baird and McKnight managed to escape and make their way back to St. Louis.

Undaunted by their former experience, they outfitted themselves again and fearlessly set out, in 1822, with another expedition to Santa Fé. They were late in starting, however, and winter overtook them before they were half-way. The snows were so deep their heavily laden horses could make no headway. They knew that they must camp and wait for spring.

On an island in the Arkansas, where the water would afford at least a little protection from

marauding Indians, they pitched their camp, cached their goods, so it would be concealed if the Indians did come, and for three long months were literally snowed in. One by one their pack-animals died of starvation or were frozen to death; and when spring came at last the men were forced to make their way to Taos, procure mules, and come back for their cached goods. The place for years afterward was known, up and down the Arkansas and the Old Santa Fé Trail, as "The Caches."

The year before, a brave little party, led by Colonel Hugh Glenn, having made the same mistake of starting too late in the season, was caught in the bitter cold and deep snows of the mountains. They met with many other hardships, these pioneers on an unblazed trail. As soon as they reached the Indian country their troubles began. One night they entertained some Indian chiefs; the next morning a valuable horse was missing. One of the men, too ill to travel, was left behind, and another man was left to look after him and search for the horse. As the party halted that evening, "Peno Returned With the Sick man but With out the lost Hors the Hors is no dout Stolen and With the knoledge of the Chiefs—these last Indeans ap-

peer more unfrendly and talk Sassy and bad to us but this is to be Exspected as they are Said to be a Collection of the Raskels from the other vileges."

When they camped on Cow Creek, where many caravans and stage-coaches in the later years of the Trail had their first skirmish with the Indians, they were alarmed by seeing their hunters racing back to camp, with Indians in close pursuit. "We Emedetly maid a Brest Worke of our Bagage," records Fowler, the faithful journalist of the party, "and Remaned the balence of the day Waiting the arivel of the Indeans—but none appeered—Some Buffelow Bulls Ware killed to day."

They frequently saw "Emence Hords of fatt Buffelow and maney Wild Horses," as they rode doggedly on along the Arkansas, headed for the mountains; and as winter was fast upon them—"this morning the Ice We Seen frose in the Kittle about as thick as the Blaid of a knife"—they had to halt to dress buffalo-skins for their immediate needs. By November ninth the snow was ankle-deep, and a cold, driving wind beat the flakes into their faces, but they went floundering through it, urging their weary horses on. A few days later, at the mouth of the

Purgatoire, they had a "desperet" fight with a grizzly:

"13 novr tusday—Camped in a grove of Bushes and timber. We Stoped Heare about one oclock and Sent back for one Hors that Was not able to keep up—We Heare found some grapes among the brush—While Some Ware Hunting and others Cooking Some Picking grapes a gun Was fyered off and the Cry of a White Bare [grizzly] Was Raised—We Ware all armed in an Instent and Each man Run His own Cors to look for the desperet anemel—the Brush in Which We Camped Contained from 10 to 20 acors Into Which the Bare Had Run for Shelter finding Him Self Surrounded on all Sides—threw this Conl glann With four others atemted to Run but the Bare lay Close in the Brush undiscovered till they Ware With in a few feet of it—When it Sprung up and Caught Lewis doson [Dawson] and Pulled Him down in an Instent.

"Conl glanns gun mised fyer or He Wold Have Releved the man But a large Dog Which belongs to the Party atacted the Bare With such fury that it left the man and persued Her a few steps in Which time the man got up and Run a few steps but Was overtaken by the Bare—

When the Conl maid a second atemt to shoot but his gun mised fyer and the Dog as before Releved the man who Run as before—but Was Soon again in the grasp of the Bare Who Semed Intent on His distruction—the Conl again Run Close up and as before His gun Wold not go off the Dog makeing another atack and Releveing the man.

"The Conl now be Came alarmed lest the Bare Wold pusue and Run up a Stooping tree—and after Him the Wounded man and Was followed by the Bare and thus they Ware all three up one tree—but a tree standing in Rich [reach] the Conl steped on that and let the man and Bare pas till the Bare Caught Him [Dawson] by one leg and drew Him Backwards down the tree. While this Was doing the Conl Sharpened His flint Primed His gun and Shot the Bare down While pulling the man by the leg before any of the party arived to Releve Him —but the Bare Soon Rose again but Was Shot by several others Who Had got up to the place of action.

"16th—the unfortunet man died at day Brake —and Was Berred near the Bank With a Strong Pen of logs over Him to prevent the Bares or Wolves from Scratching Him up."

A week later, well up in the foothills, they ran into a village of two hundred Kiowa lodges among the bare-branched cottonwoods beside the river. The old Kiowa chief and his warriors were so friendly that the men decided to "lay by" for a few days to rest their horses, especially as the snow was now a foot deep and the wind extremely cold.

All day long Indians continued to arrive, until by nightfall there were nearly four hundred Comanche lodges pitched beside those of the Kiowas. Glenn's party, penned up in the midst of the camp, was not a little alarmed, for the attitude of the Comanches was openly hostile and they outnumbered the friendly Kiowas two to one.

The following morning a long council was held between the chiefs of the two nations, and Glenn and his interpreter were then sent for.

"We are ready," said the head chief of the Comanches, "to receive the goods that our White Father has sent to us."

Colonel Glenn was aghast. He did not know that the preceding year Major Long had told these Comanches that if they were friendly their White Father in Washington, President Monroe, would send them many presents. The Co-

manche chief believed that here were the promised gifts; and "when He was told that there Was no Such goods He Became in a great Pashion and told the Conl that He was a lyer and a theef and that He Had Stolen the goods and that He the Cheef Wold take the goods and Segnefyed that He Wold kill the Conl and His men too upon Which the Conl and His Inturpreter With drew—the Cheefs of both nations Remaned in Counsel all day—and our Setuation Was not of the most plesent nature."

As the hours passed, the alarm of the white men increased. The Comanches were determined to seize the traders' packs, believing the goods belonged to them; the white men—twenty-four in all—were as determined to fight to their last breath to protect their property. Only the friendly old head chief of the Kiowas had held back the Comanches so far; and he, believing the Indians to be in the right, must soon weaken.

At sundown the situation was tense. The council had ended; the Comanche chiefs had decided to kill the traders. They summoned their warriors.

And at that moment a tall Indian came running into the camp.

"Me Arapaho chief!" he cried. "White mans mine!"

Shaking hands with the white men as fast as possible, he pointed off to the prairie, thumping his breast with his fist and crying in a loud voice:

"White mans mine! Mine! Arapahoes plenty! Arapahoes come!"

The entire Arapaho nation was indeed on its way. Their scouts had carried the chief word of the white men's predicament, and he had himself hastened ahead to protect them. Some white man had once treated him kindly; he was now showing his appreciation. The Comanches, outnumbered by the combined Arapahoes and Kiowas, fell back sullenly to their lodges.

Still the Indians continued to arrive. After the Arapahoes were settled, the Cheyennes and Snakes appeared. In all, there were about a thousand lodges. The white men were so crowded that they informed the chiefs they were going to move a mile down the river. This almost brought war, the Comanches being afraid to let them go, lest they escape with the coveted packs. But the old Kiowa chief gave his protection, and they marched determinedly out of camp. Selecting a site a mile away, they hastened to cut logs, and pitched in feverishly to

build a strong cabin and horse-pen. The Arapahoes, however, did not mean to desert them. Their lodges completely encircled the white men, and so, although word came daily of a threatened Comanche attack, the traders felt secure.

Both the weather and the Indians held them here for several weeks, and they made the best of their enforced stay by trapping beaver. Their packs were safe in the strong log house, but at no time, day or night, could they relax their vigilance over the horses. These were constantly being stolen. The Indians, indeed, took anything they could lay their hands upon.

"One day," says Jacob Fowler, "I broke one of the glasses out of my Specks—and on putting them on I soon felt the Hand of an Indean grasp them from my face. He made off as fast as poseble—I gave up the Specks for lost but Had no moad of Replaceing them—In a Short time I Heard great Shouting and laffing and looking to See What Was the Caus I discovered the Indean that had taken my Specks Leading another With the Specks on His face—the felow Was Led up to me and I was shoon that He Had but one Eye—and that the Specks Wold Sute Him better than me as they Had but one glass—Heare

Eanded the Joack—they Returned the Specks in much good Humor."

After many adventures they finally reached Taos, Colonel Glenn and four of the men early in January and the remainder of the party in February. And on June 1, 1822, they were ready to set out on the return trail to the Missouri.

By the middle of June they were crossing the Arkansas, "for Which purpose We used the green Hide of a buffelow Bull by way of a boat." The river was not deep, but treacherous quicksand made it advisable to transport the baggage by boat and so lessen the weight of the horses.

When they camped on Pawnee Fork, four or five hundred Indians came up. Most of them were friendly Pawnees, but there were a few Comanche chiefs. Two Spaniards from Taos were traveling with Glenn's party. While they were dressed like Americans, they were almost as dark as negroes and looked nothing like the traders. The Comanches were at war with the Spaniards, and had sworn to kill every Spaniard they saw.

As the chiefs rode into camp their eyes glistened. Two scalps to decorate their tomahawks! But were these Americans or were they Spaniards? Only a council could decide that.

Forming a circle, with the two Spaniards seated inside, the Comanche chiefs began to question them, speaking Spanish. But the Spaniards only shook their heads, pretending not to understand.

"Are they Spaniards?" the head chief asked the interpreter, in the Indian tongue.

"I don't know," said the interpreter. "I can't talk to them."

"You don't know? You know how to give them horses! You can tell them how to ride! And yet you can't talk to them! That is strange. How do you get them to eat? Where did you get them?"

Considering that a fib might save the lives of the men, the interpreter replied that a few days previously they had met a party from St. Louis, and as these two men were homesick and wished to turn back they had left the others and joined them. "We had some extra horses," he finished. "And they eat when we do."

"They are Spaniards," said the Comanche. "We must kill them."

Just then a Pawnee chief spoke up. He had once seen an Englishman and a Frenchman together; they were both white, but they could not talk to each other. "Maybe these are Englishmen. Are they?"

"I don't know," said the American interpreter. "I can't talk English."

"That is it," decided the Comanche chief. "They are English! The Comanches are not at war with the English."

And, that point being settled, they had a friendly smoke and rode off.

Among the early traders who blazed the Trail to Santa Fé was Captain Becknell, of Missouri, who had reaped a rich profit through trading with the Comanches, and in the summer of 1821, with four companions and a large supply of merchandise, he crossed the plains with his pack-horses, headed for the Indian camps. But when the little cavalcade reached the mountains it ran into some Mexican rangers and the men were easily persuaded to take their goods on to San Miguel. Becknell's companions remained in New Mexico, but he returned to St. Louis in the fall, bringing with him such abundant wealth and such glowing reports of the quick fortunes to be had, that traders could scarcely wait for spring to arrive. Becknell was no less eager. He organized an expedition of thirty men and about five thousand dollars' worth of merchandise, and early in June, 1822, they took the Trail.

A party led by Colonel Cooper and his sons had preceded them by a month and, following the regular Trail, which led west along the Arkansas to the mountains, and then south over Raton Pass, they had arrived without mishap. But Captain Becknell, who had been once in New Mexico, felt that he knew enough about the country to blaze a new trail. When his pack-train arrived at The Caches, where the Arkansas River afforded good crossing, he called a halt.

"The old way from here on," he said to his companions, "is a long, rough, roundabout trail. We'll strike a beeline straight to Santa Fé, which will cut the distance by half."

Wholly unknown territory lay ahead of them; no white man had set foot upon it, and no Indian had told of its terrors.

All unsuspecting that they were riding straight into a waterless desert, the traders started gaily forward from the Arkansas with their canteens scarcely filled. They dry-camped that night, and the next night, and by the third day there was not a drop of water in all the caravan for man or beast. Soon the torments of thirst beset them, increased a thousandfold by the broiling desert sun. All around them was

sand, billows and plains and hills of sand, which the hot wind swept into their nostrils and throats. Their thirst torment grew. In desperation they killed their dogs and drank the hot blood. The sickening, thick liquid only made them the more frantic for water. They cut off the ears of their mules and drank that blood. Weakened and raving—and not knowing that only a short distance ahead was a river—they decided to retrace their steps, the many days over the burning and torturing sand, to the Arkansas. Only the strongest could live to reach it, they knew, but better that than for all to die on this merciless desert.

Just as they were turning back, an old buffalo bull plunged into their camp, and was quickly killed. When it was cut up they saw by its stomach that it had come direct from drinking heavily at a stream or spring. The men greedily swallowed this liquid, and the strongest of them then followed the buffalo's trail and came to the bank of the Cimarron, where all canteens were filled and water was taken to those too weak to move. Thus refreshed, the caravan, with a wiser Captain Becknell at its head, retraced its steps to the Arkansas, crossed the river to the Trail, and followed the Trail to Taos—riding

into the sun-drenched adobe town with a train of earless mules to tell the tale of their thirst-torture.

After the first hardy adventurers had shown the way, the pack-trains increased in size and value as more and more traders felt the lure of the Santa Fé Trail too strong to resist. Annually long strings of pack-mules, or pack-horses, set out; Becknell had with him in 1822 a few wagons; but it was not until 1824 that a real wagon-train appeared. In the spring of that year Captain Smith, a veteran mountaineer, trapper and hunter, declared that he could guide a wagon-train even through the difficult mountain passes. The more daring of the traders were willing to try the experiment; and when the caravan formed there were two sturdy carts, two covered road-wagons, and twenty-two family carriages, which had been requisitioned for the occasion and packed to their utmost capacity. Many traders, however, clung to their faithful pack-mules, for they remembered the roughness of the prairie trail, the rivers to be crossed, the knife-edge path, wide enough for a sure-footed mule, that crossed the mountains.

Setting out from Missouri in the late spring of 1824, this strange and motley caravan, creak-

ing and groaning under the weight of its merchandise, lumbered into Taos—to the amazement of Spaniards and Indians alike—in the early summer of that year, and returned without misadventure in the fall.

Although the Trail led through the country of the Pawnees, Comanches, Arapahoes, Kiowas, Cheyennes, Apaches and others who later proved such a terror to the caravans, the early traders were little molested by the Indians. The Red Men were quite willing to be friendly; and in exchange for a trifling present they offered the hospitality of their camps, the service of their best hunters. The white men alone were to blame for the horrors of later days. There were traders who, having some grievance, shot any Indian they saw. A few of these cold-blooded murders were overlooked, but when they became more numerous, the Indians, who had been wholehearted in their friendship, proved that they could be no less thorough in their revenge.

The caravans, leaving the Missouri in late spring with merchandise for trade in Taos or Santa Fé, would return along the Trail in the fall with herds of horses and mules, which could be sold at a good profit at home. These herds

were in large measure responsible for the increasing hostility between trader and Indian, for the Indians found that stampeding the animals and driving them off was an excellent way for revenge.

One day on the return Trail twelve men, with five hundred horses and mules, were camped beside the Cimarron River, when three Arapahoes rode up and dismounted.

"How!" they said in friendly greeting.

"How!" returned the traders, believing they were but three chance Indians who happened to be passing.

The Arapahoes remained only a short time—but long enough to see the corral of animals and observe that among all the white men there were only four serviceable guns. They were still friendly as they rode off; and the traders, not realizing they were scouts sent to spy upon their camp, were much surprised when a little later thirty Arapahoes appeared, all on foot and each carrying a lariat.

"Tired walk," said the leader, in clipped English. "Want horse to ride."

In consternation the men realized that there were but twelve of them, with four guns, against thirty Indians fully armed with bows and ar-

rows, guns and tomahawks. To refuse would mean death for all of them.

"All right," said one of the traders, none too graciously. "Catch a horse apiece."

The Indians were quick to obey; and a few minutes later they were back again, each leading a fine animal.

"One horse no good! Want two horse!"

"Oh, very well," sighed the trader. "Catch another one apiece."

At this the Indians leaped upon their horses, swung their lariats, and let out such blood-curdling yells that the herd was stampeded and they succeeded in driving off the entire five hundred animals, leaving the men with only their saddle-horses, which had been picketed beside them.

The traders realized how careless they had been to permit the Indians to catch them so poorly armed. While camping in the Indian country the white men could not be too watchful. Caravans kept guards constantly on the alert, knowing that they might pay dearly for any carelessness.

In the fall of 1828 a large caravan, of a hundred wagons and more than a thousand animals, set out from Taos for the Missouri. When they went into camp one night beside the Trail, two

of the men, McNess and Monroe, carried their buffalo-robes to the bank of the nearby creek and lay down to sleep, several yards from the caravan. In the gray light of approaching dawn a spying Cheyenne, seeing them alone, crept up to steal their guns. As he seized the weapons, it roused the men, but before they could make an outcry the Indian had shot them both, and escaped while the camp was in an uproar. McNess died instantly. He was buried on the spot, and Monroe was tenderly carried by his companions for four miles, when he, too, died, as they reached the Cimarron River. As he was being buried beside the river, seven friendly Comanches rode up on their ponies and halted across the stream to watch the ceremony. Not only were they innocent of the crime; they did not even know that an Indian had killed the man.

But they were Indians. That was enough for the traders. Without a word of explanation, they drew their guns and killed the Comanches on the spot, only one managing to escape, wounded, to carry word to his tribe. The Comanches, infuriated by this cold-blooded slaughter, quickly put on their war-paint and set out on their fleet ponies, overtaking the cara-

van a few days later. There were not enough of them to massacre the white men in so large a caravan, but they succeeded in stampeding the stock and driving off a thousand horses and mules. Then, their revenge having only begun, they hastened back along the Trail, to lie in wait for the next white men to come along.

This happened to be a small party, of only twenty-one men, returning from Taos with a hundred and fifty mules, and four wagons laden with silver coin and bullion. While still a long distance from the American border they rode over the summit of a hill to see, to their consternation, a band of Comanches, in full war-paint and feathers, awaiting them on the Trail. There was no turning back, no turning to right or left; they had to make their way through the midst of the Indians—peaceably if they could; if not, fighting to the death.

And fighting it proved to be. Three traders were riding behind the wagons. One of them was killed, and scalped almost before he fell. The others succeeded in escaping and rode furiously until nightfall. Then, with no sign of pursuit, they camped, in order to rest their frightened and weary animals.

"We tied our gray bell-mare to a stake," one

of them says, "and went out and jingled the bell, whenever any of us could do so, thus keeping the animals from stampeding. We corralled our wagons for better protection, and the Indians kept us busy all night resisting their furious charges. We all knew that death at our posts would be infinitely preferable to falling into their hands; so we resolved to sell our lives as dearly as possible.

"The next day we made but five miles; it was a continuous fight, and a very difficult matter to prevent their capturing us. This annoyance was kept up for four days; they would surround us, then let up as if taking time to renew their strength, to suddenly charge upon us again, and they continued thus to harass us until we were almost exhausted from loss of sleep.

"After leaving the Cimarron, we once more emerged on the open plains and flattered ourselves we were well rid of the savages; but about twelve o'clock they came down on us again, uttering their demoniacal yells, which frightened our horses and mules so terribly, that we lost every hoof.

"When the painted demons saw that one of their number had been killed by us, they left the field for a time, while we, taking advantage of

the temporary lull, went back to our wagons and built breastworks of them, the harness and saddles. From noon until two hours in the night, when the moon went down, the savages were apparently confident we would soon fall a prey to them, and they made charge after charge upon our rude fortifications.

"Darkness was now upon us. There were two alternatives before us: should we resolve to die where we were, or attempt to escape in the black hours of the night? It was a desperate situation. Our little band looked the matter squarely in the face, and, after a council of war had been held, we determined to escape, if possible."

But with all their animals gone, the wagons had to be abandoned, and with the wagons a large part of the heavy coin. The unfortunate traders could take with them only what they could carry on their backs. Each man hoisted upon his shoulders a sack containing nearly a thousand silver dollars, and they set out, traveling all night, avoiding the Trail and turning northward in order to escape the Comanches. All the next day they trudged, bent under their burden, with nothing to eat but a few prickly pears. When night came again, they had reached the Arkansas River; and the men, weakened by

hunger and exhaustion, unable to struggle farther with the great weight of the silver, decided to cache their treasure.

A full moon flooded the river; in the midst of the water was a little island green with cottonwood trees—an ideal spot. While four men kept alert watch that no one spied upon them, the others buried upon the island more than fifteen thousand dollars in shining silver, carefully covering the place with turf to conceal all evidence of a cache.

Crossing the Arkansas then, they straggled on for another week before they came upon the Santa Fé Trail once more. They had had almost nothing to eat, and some were now so exhausted they could go no farther. Two fell, and begged to be left. Even as they lay pleading for their starving comrades to go on, to save themselves if they could, a crow flew over them, and was killed and divided among the twenty men. A council was then called, and it was decided that the five strongest men should make all the haste they could to Independence—nearly two hundred miles away—to send back succor to the others.

These five men, "living skeletons wrapped in rags," eventually arrived in Independence; and

the rescue party came just in time to save the fifteen starving men who were found scattered at various places along the Trail.

Such was the indomitable spirit of the Santa Fé trader that these same men, undaunted by their hardships, set out with the caravan the following spring. And on this trip they recovered their buried treasure, even though the spring freshet, flooding the island, had washed away the top soil, and the great pile of silver lay completely exposed, the bright glitter conspicuous among the cottonwood-trees.

This year's caravan, 1829, was to meet with many adventures. For the first time, there was a military escort. But in spite of that, the Comanches were still on the war-path, still out for revenge for the cold-blooded killing of their six men. The return trip, too, was to be eventful, with a spirited fight with the Indians and a wild night ride.

CHAPTER IV

"CATCH UP! CATCH UP!"

ONE of the important points along the Santa Fé Trail, in the early days, was a stretch of woods known as Council Grove.

In the very long ago, the Arapahoes claim, there was only a small creek, winding through a treeless plain. On its banks their tribe met a nation that came down from the north, and when they had battled for three days, the Great Spirit commanded them to smoke the calumet. This was done; but the northern chiefs had no intention of keeping the peace-pact; even before the stars had paled, their warriors were creeping out with their bows and arrows and spears, to fall upon the unsuspecting Arapahoes. In anger the Great Spirit appeared, and the frightened warriors scattered, running here and there. The Arapahoes rushed out of their lodges just in time to see every warrior rooted to the spot, turned into a tree, his war-cry softened to an angry murmur which

any one can hear when the wind blows through the grove.

From that day tribes even from far off came to this woods to hold their treaty-councils, knowing that no peace-pact made here would be broken—the consequences would be too fearful. And so the place came to be known as The-trees-where-peace-pipes-are-smoked; and to the white men as Council Grove.

It was here that the wagons, bound for Taos or Santa Fé, met and were organized into caravans. They had set out from Independence, a hundred and fifty miles to the east, in separate groups and made their way to Council Grove, to be there before the date the caravan planned to take the Trail.

A few days were spent at the Grove making repairs and cutting extra axle-trees, one to be lashed beneath every wagon; for this was the last place on the route where hard wood could be obtained, and rare indeed was the trip over rough Raton Pass when many axles were not snapped.

Here, also, the packing of the wagons was carefully inspected. The ten days' jolting between Independence, or Franklin, and Council Grove would show any weak places; the mer-

chandise must be so solidly arranged that no amount of rough-going could injure it. Any mules, too, that had proved to be still a little wild, were now put through a further taming-process. Their first brutal lesson, as described by an old-timer, had been given before the wagons set out:

"The mules had to be lassoed, their heads drawn up to a wagon-wheel, with scarce two inches of spare rope to relax the tight noose on their necks, and starved for twenty-four hours to subdue their fiery tempers; then harnessed to a heavy wagon, lashed unmercifully when they did not pull, whipped still harder when they ran into still faster speed, until, after an hour's bewilderment, and plunging and kicking, they became tractable and broken down."

During the few days at Council Grove, the traders had to be constantly on the alert, for Kaw Indians hung around, watching for a chance to steal mules—only that they might claim they had caught them running away, far off on the plain, and sell them back to their owners! The Kaws were clever; a trader's back would scarcely be turned before a mule would disappear. Thus handicapped, with the long and arduous Trail ahead of him, the trader would

pay a good price to recover it, even while he wished to thrash the thieving Indian.

The covered wagons first used were drawn by six or eight mules; but later heavier wagons, with greater capacity, were employed and it required ten or twelve mules to draw them. After 1829, oxen were used, especially for the heavier wagons.

When the caravan was organized, the first step was to choose a captain. No one wanted this position, and the traders who were really clever were very ingenious in avoiding it. There were often long arguments at Council Grove, often the most absurd of excuses, until one poor man was picked upon and put at the head of the outfit. No one ever thought of obeying this captain, except where it happened to suit the trader's convenience. The duties of the leader were to direct the day's march, designate the camping-ground at night, and see that the wagons "formed" quickly if an Indian attack came.

When at last all was in readiness at Council Grove, and the day came for the wagons to set out, the captain gave the familiar cry—heard every morning on the Trail when camp was broken:

"Catch up! Catch up!"

The words went ringing from group to group, and teamsters sprang to their mules, each striving to be the first to finish harnessing, so he might be the first to cry, "All set!"

When the last man was "All set!" the captain's voice would be heard again:

"Stretch out!"

To the cracking of whips, the straining of harness, the creaking and groaning of wagons, the final order came from the captain:

"Fall in!"

And the wagons, in two long lines, went lumbering off over the plains. They kept to two lines until they reached Ash Creek, and from there they went four abreast, able thus to travel more rapidly and to "form" more quickly if an Indian attack came while they were on the march.

When they camped at sunset, or earlier, the wagons were used to form a corral. As they drove up, all the odd numbers turned to the right and the even numbers to the left, circling wide to form a large oval, halting hub to hub, the front wheel of one wagon against the back wheel of the one in front of it. Inside this corral the mules could be kept safe from stampede in case of an Indian attack; and the wagons

would serve for breastworks when necessary. When there was no sign of the enemy, the mules were tethered outside the corral; and there, too, the men built their supper fires.

Each group carried "a skillet, a frying-pan, a sheet-iron kettle, a coffee-pot, and each man had his huge tin cup and a butcher-knife. The pan and kettle are set upon a grassy turf, and all crowd round, using their hands to remove food and eat it."

Every man went fully armed, the party making, as one of them says, "a very brigand-like appearance." Some carried rifles; others preferred double-barreled shotguns; all had pistols and hunting-knives. In the early days, each was supplied with a powder-horn or powder-flask, and a bag of lead balls he had molded before starting. In his wagon he carried always a twenty-five pound keg of powder—a source of much worry when a prairie fire was near.

Next to being captain of the caravan, the most distasteful duty was night guard. But none could evade this; each must take his turn keeping watch while the others, wrapped in their blankets and buffalo-robes, lay asleep on the ground outside the corral.

If stealthy figures were seen crawling up at

dawn—the favorite time for an Indian attack—the alarm was given by the watchful sentinel; the men, awake instantly, sprang to their arms, the tethered mules were rushed into the enclosure, and the traders took their stand in a wide circle around the corral, all facing outward, their guns ready for instant action.

They knew that the customary method of attack was for the Indians to ride, on incredibly swift war ponies, in a widespread circle about the camp, closing in nearer and nearer, shooting as they rode. Among the pioneers there were marksmen who could pick an Indian off his horse no matter how fast the pace; but few of the traders in a freight caravan were such good shots, and Indian arrows had a better chance at the stationary men than the men's bullets had at flying Indians. Besides, the warriors usually lay almost completely hidden on the offside of their ponies, shooting either under the horse's neck or immediately over its back.

One of the earliest wagon-trains, returning from Santa Fé, went into camp one night beside Walnut Creek, where there was ample forage and water for the animals. Extra sentinels were placed, for this was known to be one of the most dangerous spots on the Trail.

The night passed quietly, but at the first streak of dawn the sentinels cried the alarm. The traders leaped to their feet. A few of them rushed the mules into the corral. Others sprang to their posts outside the wagons, their rifles and old-fashioned flint-lock muskets held ready.

The shrill, ear-splitting cry of the Pawnees, and the pounding of a hundred horse-hoofs, announced the enemy even before they dashed up. Lightning-quick, they passed, discharging their arrows and getting beyond range; wheeling and racing back, to let loose another rain of arrows.

The battle lasted for hours, the men falling back to the protection of the wagons, half of them firing while the other half reloaded. There were thirty traders and a hundred Indians.

Finding they could not capture the mules, the Pawnees at last withdrew, carrying their wounded and slain; and the traders quickly set out upon the Trail, to cover as much distance as possible before the Pawnees could bury their dead and return.

Many of the caravans carried cannon through the hostile Indian country; and in order not to be hampered with them on the parts of the Trail where they were not needed, the traders had reg-

ular burying-places for them on the banks of the Arkansas. The cannon would be dug up when the caravan arrived, carried through the danger zone, and then again cached until the return trip.

A cache constructed along the Trail differed little from the one Father Hennepin described a century and a half earlier:

"We took up the green Sodd, and laid it by, and digg'd a hole in the Earth where we put our Goods, and cover'd them with pieces of Timber and Earth, and then put in again the green Turf; so that 'twas impossible to suspect that any Hole had been digg'd under it, for we flung the Earth into the River."

Yankee ingenuity was called upon to outwit not only the Indians, but the Mexican authorities, as well. When New Mexico was still part of Old Mexico, a duty of five hundred dollars was imposed on every wagon which arrived from the United States. It mattered not how large or small the vehicle, nor how valuable or worthless the cargo, the tax was the same—five hundred dollars for each wagon. This seemed unreasonable to the American traders, and they devised a scheme for avoiding at least the major part of it. Halting in a canyon not too far from

Santa Fé, they piled the contents of three wagons into one, strapping it on somehow, and then burned the two empty wagons, to keep their ruse from being discovered and triple duty charged.

The Mexican governor had another way of collecting large fees from the traders, by taxing all the gold and silver, received in payment for their merchandise, they carried out of New Mexico. To evade this, each wagon was supplied with a false, hollow axle-tree, and in this cavity the greater part of the gold-dust and silver bullion was concealed, the traders paying a tax—which they considered large enough—on the remainder.

The men who rode the Trail to Santa Fé often took with them one or more boys, for the experience the Trail would give them. And there was never lack of interest along the way.

Often they would see an Indian village on the move. When Frémont passed over the Trail, with Kit Carson for his guide and two wide-awake boys riding beside him, almost the first thing they saw was the plain literally covered with Indians. The Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahoes were returning from the Arkansas where they had been to meet the Kiowas and Comanches. "Dispersed over the plain in scat-

tered bodies of horsemen and family groups of women and children, with dog-trains carrying baggage and long lines of pack-horses, their appearance was picturesque and imposing."

The wild animal life was of never-ceasing interest to the boys on the Trail. Often they could see, as did the two boys with Frémont, "buffalo swarming in immense numbers over the plains, where they had left scarcely a blade of grass standing. It was the early part of the day, when the herds are feeding; and everywhere they were in motion. Here and there a huge old bull was rolling in the grass; and clouds of dust rose in the air from various parts of the bands, each the scene of some obstinate fight."

Nothing held quite the interest, the fascination, of the buffalo. "Its shape and form are so marvelous and laughable, or frightful," wrote one of the earliest Spaniards in New Mexico, "that the more one sees it, the more one desires to see it, and no one could be so melancholy that if he were to see it a hundred times a day he could keep from laughing heartily as many times."

The boys were both amused by the appearance of the shaggy beasts, racing over the plains with heads down and tails up, and thrilled by the prospect of shooting one. Scarcely a day passed,

in the long trek beside the Arkansas, that they could not have written in their diaries, as did William Clark, on the famous Lewis and Clark expedition: "We beheld a butifull inclined Plain, in which there is great numbers of Buffalow, Elk & Goats in view feeding & scipping on those Plains Grouse, Larks & the Prairie bird is common in those Plains." While there were no goats skipping along the Santa Fé Trail, there were nimble coyotes, and the fleetest of wild horses.

There were antelope to be followed and grizzly bears to be tackled. In hunting the antelope, all boys were familiar with the old method of tying a rag or handkerchief to the gun-barrel and waving it to arouse the curiosity of the antelope, so they will approach to investigate. But on the Trail the boys learned a new method from the old frontiersmen, a method they claimed never failed to draw the curious animals. This was for the hunter to stand on his head and wave his feet in the air!

Two boys out for antelope tried this strange lure, but if the waving feet of one attracted the animal, the hilarious laughter of the other frightened it away, and so the experiment proved unsuccessful.

More exciting to them was a grizzly bear hunt, in which they were sometimes permitted to participate.

Young James Pattie, traveling with his father's caravan, went out one day with the hunters, and when they came upon a grizzly, it took them nearly an hour to kill it, for the furious "white bear" kept chasing one or another of them and so prevented them from shooting. "His claws were four inches long and very sharp," recorded the young hunter. "He had killed a buffaloe bull, eaten part of it, and buried the remainder. When we came upon him, he was watching the spot where he buried it, to keep off the wolves, which literally surrounded him." Young Pattie always saved the claws of the grizzlies to trade with warriors, "they being of considerable value among the Indians, who wear them around the neck as the distinguishing mark of a brave."

One night when this youthful traveler was standing guard, a bear came boldly up to the corral and sprang upon one of the horses, the other horses taking instant fright, bursting their fastenings and darting off frantically over the prairie.

More troublesome than bears were the gray wolves that lurked about the corrals. More

than one boy was kept awake by the weird howling of a hungry wolf-pack. In lean seasons, these animals became both numerous and bold; but at least one old frontiersman discovered an unfailing way to drive them off.

"Several fishhooks," he says, "are tied together by their shanks and put in a piece of fresh meat which is dropped where it is likely to be found by them. The hooks are buried completely within the meat and made very fast, to prevent the wolf from shaking them off; for it is said by those acquainted with the habit of wolves that they never eat a morsel of anything without first picking it up very cautiously and giving it a shake. When the piece of meat is swallowed, the hooks generally stick fast in the throat, inflicting the most excruciating pain. The unlucky wolf immediately begins to scratch and tear his neck and howl most piteously. In this condition he hurries away from the place of his mishap, running and raving and scratching and howling. Curiosity prompts every other wolf in sight and in hearing to follow. Away the gang goes, increasing as it goes, until every wolf in the vicinity of their route is taken in, and taken away perhaps fifty miles from the place where the matter began."

Vast herds of wild horses were to be seen. Lowly cottontails went bounding away over the grass. Prairie-dog villages were scattered everywhere, with prairie-owls sometimes perched upon the dog-mounds, and rattlesnakes crawling out of the dogs' snug homes to sun themselves on the plain.

Rattlesnakes were one of the banes of the Trail, as they were usually met with in great numbers and on a part of the prairie where there was neither stick nor stone to do them battle. The caravan would be compelled to halt, and a great popping of guns would follow, to clear a path lest the mules or oxen be bitten.

One day a German trader set out along the Trail with a bag of rice slung behind his saddle. This was a great luxury he was carrying to sell to an emigrant camp only nine miles away. He was warned that he would have to pass through a place infested with rattlesnakes; but the fine money he would receive for his rice induced him to trust to his fleet horse to carry him through safely.

Scarcely had he reached the dangerous snake-area, which extended for a mile or more, when he was alarmed to hear an ominous rattle. Lashing his horse, he fairly flew over the hard

ground; but he couldn't escape; the rattle increased, grew more alarming as he went, until it seemed that every rattlesnake on the prairie was under his horse's hoofs.

His eyes wild with fright, his horse in a lather of foam, he dashed into the camp.

The emigrants were startled.

"Indians!" cried some one, believing he was being pursued.

"Nein! Schnakes!" yelled the German.

Leaping from his horse, he was dismayed to find the rice-bag empty, a hole in one of the seams. With drooping jaw, he realized that there had been no snakes; the rattle had been caused by the pelting of his rice on the hard ground!

But however much interest wild animal life may have afforded the riders of the Trail, it was always the Indians that claimed their first attention.

Frémont says that Indians were the "poetry of the prairie." Too often, Santa Fé traders found them the reverse. To them the romance and glamour of the Red Men were lost in the grim reality. At sunset when the wagons corralled for the night camp, there was always the tense expectancy of an attack. And when morn-

ing came, and the captain's cry rang out, "Catch up! Catch up!" there was the greater possibility that the Indians would fall upon them on the march.

CHAPTER V

THE FIGHT WITH THE COMANCHES

THE Indians along the Santa Fé Trail grew so troublesome that no caravan could pass without being molested, often with dire results; and the traders at last petitioned the Government for military escort. In response, Major Bennett Riley and four companies of infantry were ordered to accompany the caravan that set out for Santa Fé in the spring of 1829.

The Comanches, still thirsting for revenge upon the white men, had their spies posted along the Trail; and when they discovered troops guarding the train, they made no attempt to attack, but bided their time, knowing that American soldiers would not go beyond Chouteau's Island, in the Arkansas River, which marked the Mexican border. The Trail beyond the Arkansas, beyond the protection of American troops, wound through a confusion of sand hills, affording ample hiding for Comanche warriors.

When the caravan arrived at Chouteau's Island, Major Riley pitched camp, to wait there

for the return of the traders from Taos in October, when he would escort them again through the dangerous Indian country, back toward Independence.

The traders were reluctant to leave the escort and set off alone for Santa Fé, but there seemed nothing else to be done. As the wagons lumbered on over the uneven Trail, the men kept a sharp lookout for Indians, and three scouts rode well in advance to reconnoiter.

Having discovered no signs of the enemy—although the immense sand hills all about them concealed a large band of Kiowas, the most bloodthirsty of all—the three scouts dismounted at a little creek and stooped to drink. Instantly the Kiowas were upon them. Two of the scouts, leaping upon their horses, firing as they wheeled, raced back toward the caravan; the third, who had been mounted on a mule, was overtaken by the fleet Indian ponies and killed and scalped.

"Kiowas! Kiowas!" cried the two scouts, rushing up to the wagons.

The word brought consternation to the traders.

"Form!" shouted Colonel Bent, captain of the caravan.

As the order passed down the line, the traders whipped up their mules, each hastening to his

place in the great oval corral formed by the forty wagons. Already a swift messenger was speeding back to Major Riley with word of the impending Indian attack and a plea for assistance. And scarcely had he reached the soldiers, panting his news, when the bugle called them to action and the men rushed to respond. In a very short time they were on the march, elated at this unexpected chance for a fight, after all.

Stealing up to the wagon-train quietly in the night, they intended to surprise the Kiowas, who, believing the traders defenseless, would certainly attack at sunrise. At dawn the soldiers must be awake, ready, and the thoughtless bugler sounded *reveille,* the clear notes ringing out over the plain, apprising the Indians of the presence of the troops.

The Kiowas fell back; and Major Riley then escorted the caravan as far as Sand Creek, where, believing all danger passed, he returned with his command to Chouteau's Island to wait for the caravan's coming in the fall.

The Comanches, awaiting their chance, had circled wide and approached the Trail at Rabbit-Ear Mountain, where they threw up a barricade of brush and sand and from behind this protection planned a surprise attack upon the

"THE KIOWAS WERE UPON THEM. TWO OF THE SCOUTS RACED BACK TO THE CARAVAN"

wagons as they came along. Mexican scouts riding in advance, however, gave the alarm, and the Comanches fled, after having killed one of the scouts and another Mexican who had wandered off the Trail to hunt.

Without further misadventure the traders reached Santa Fé, and there separated, to meet again in September for the homeward trip along the Santa Fé Trail.

When they were ready to start northward in the fall, it was found that several wealthy Spanish families, comfortable in carriages and with servants to attend them, wished to journey to the Missouri with the caravan; and to guard these important personages the Governor had been induced to send a detachment of Mexican troops, under Captain Viscarra, to escort the caravan to Chouteau's Island, in the Arkansas, from which point it would have the escort of American troops. Among the Mexican soldiers were ten Pueblo Indians.

While the caravan was in the bustle of forming, ready to take the northward Trail, Workman and Spencer, the two lost trappers who had now been in Santa Fé for twenty years, suddenly felt a great longing to see their native land again. Without hesitating, they fell to packing their

baggage, and when the wagon-train set out it had with it these two old veterans.

Nothing happened until the caravan reached the Cimarron. There, at sunset, with the sandy plain reflecting the gorgeous coloring of a flaming sky, the captain called a halt and the wagons "formed" for the night camp.

Scarcely had they been driven into position when a hundred Indians suddenly appeared on foot, fully armed, drawn up in formidable line in front of the camp. There was no mistaking: they were Comanches; and they were in full war-paint and feathers. Without a word their chief stepped forward and began to "act the mad buffalo," by stooping and picking up a handful of dust and throwing it into the air—as a buffalo paws up the ground when he offers challenge to his foe.

The traders, caught off guard, wished to parley; but the sight of the Comanches flourishing their arms and fearful in their war-paint caused them to hesitate to leave the protection of the wagons.

One trader, more bold than the others, presently stepped from behind the defenses and started toward the Indians, calling to them that he came to parley. The Comanche chief

stepped forward to meet him halfway, carrying a gun in one hand and a cross in the other—to signify that he was ready for either war or peace.

Just as they met, two Comanches sprang out of their line and dashed forward with guns raised. And almost as quickly two traders leaped to the assistance of their comrade. Breathless moments followed. Each side waited for the other to make the first move; yet each was determined to be the first to shoot, should there be hostility.

On top of a nearby hill the ten Pueblo Indians, part of Captain Viscarra's command, were busily skinning a buffalo when one of them happened to glance down at the camp. Comanches! Their mortal foe! Dropping the buffalo-skin, they dashed down the hill, letting out a mighty war-cry that brought amazement and consternation to the Comanches. Their old enemy, the Pueblos! How many were there? Perhaps an immense number hidden behind the hill!

The Comanche chief quickly made overtures of friendship, and Captain Viscarra called in his Pueblos. The traders, viewing the fierce aspect of the Comanches, felt it would be wiser to accept this proffered friendship. But the

Pueblos, knowing the Comanches of old, were eager to fight.

"Their friendship is deceit!" they declared through an interpreter. "They only want to catch us off our guard so they can attack us. We must fight them before they fight us!"

The traders, undecided, looked questioningly at Captain Viscarra and his Mexican troops.

"We will not fight," said the captain haughtily. "The Mexicans have entered into peace with the Comanches, and to fight them would be a breach of faith."

"That is only an excuse!" cried the furious Pueblos. "You are all cowards! You are *afraid* to fight!" To shame the Mexicans they threw down their shields. "We will even fight them without any defense against their arrows!"

But the soldiers held back.

"Squaws!" cried the Pueblos, in the utmost contempt.

All this while the Comanches had been watching and listening with eager interest. A brave show on the part of the soldiers would have made them hesitate, but when they saw Captain Viscarra and his frightened men faltering, even cowering, and discovered that, after all, there were only ten of those courageous fighters, the

Pueblos, their attitude of friendship quickly changed. They boldly approached the traders and began to mingle among them, waiting for a favorable opportunity to begin the assault. The Pueblos never for an instant took their eyes off them.

Suddenly the Comanche chief gave a yell. That was the signal. The hundred Comanches fired upon soldiers and traders and Pueblos, and then turned and fled quickly across the creek to reload.

Four splendid Pueblo warriors lay dead, besides many of the Mexican soldiers and a few of the traders.

Among the white men there was the utmost confusion. Some jumped to their mules, to keep them from stampeding, some fell over the wealthy Spaniards and their servants who were fleeing to the covered wagons for safety, some grabbed their arms and dashed to the fight, for the Comanches, having reloaded, were again upon them.

One brave Comanche, rushing in advance of his band, firing as he came, was shot by Workman, who led the traders. The Comanche dropped, mortally wounded, but from the ground he raised himself long enough to reload

and kill a Mexican soldier before he fell back dead.

The six Pueblos, furious that the cowardice of the white men had cost them the lives of their four brothers, sat on the ground beside their slain and refused to take any further part in the action.

The fight was ending, however, for the Comanches had run out of ammunition; they had had only two or three rounds. The only thing they could do was to take to flight; and this they speedily did, with the traders hot on their heels. Sixteen traders followed them, racing over the low sand hills, popping guns as they ran; but in the excitement only one or two had thought to grab a horse, and the Comanches, fleet of foot, were quickly outdistancing them.

In the chase was a Mexican soldier, well mounted; but he had no intention of fighting the Indians; he had come only to rob those the traders killed, and soon his horse was laden with bows and arrows, guns, buffalo-robes, and blankets.

Old Wallace, a veteran pioneer and one of the bravest men on the plains, panted up beside the Mexican.

"Drop 'em!" he cried, jerking at a blanket.

"If you won't fight, give me the horse so I can chase the savages!"

"But, señor," smiled the Mexican, "I need the horse to carry these things back to camp."

Infuriated, and seeing that the Mexican was making no effort to get the fleeing Comanches, Old Wallace felt it an emergency which would justify any measures. The next moment the Mexican lay dead on the plain, half buried beneath his plunder, while Old Wallace, now mounted, went flying over the prairie in hot pursuit of the Comanches.

The fight had not begun till after sunset, and nightfall had now come, but the prairie was flooded with moonlight, and the foremost traders soon saw, far off, a large encampment of Indians. It was the main camp of the Comanches, to which the small band was fleeing.

The traders could only turn back, and get their own camp in readiness to withstand the attack they felt certain would come at dawn by the entire Comanche force. The horses and mules were driven inside the fortification formed by the wagons and baggage; arms were inspected; bullet-pouches and powder-horns were filled, and belts and pockets carried extra ammunition; and long before the coming of

dawn sentinels were placed on nearby hills where they could scan the plains in all directions.

But the day passed and the Indians held back.

This alarmed the men, and at sundown they held a council. Already they were one day overdue at Chouteau's Island. Would Major Riley wait till they arrived? Probably not, for he had orders to leave on the tenth. Perhaps Comanche spies had taken word to their tribe that the American troops were already on the homeward march, and this was why they had not attacked. They were delaying until the caravan could be surprised defenseless beyond the Arkansas, when the Mexican soldiers, such as they were, had turned back.

It seemed to the traders a desperate situation; and every day's delay increased their danger.

"A man on a fleet hoss could get through to Riley by daybreak," said an old trader. "If he knew of our plight, he'd wait for us. We may have to fight our way kinda slow, mile by mile. Who'll volunteer to carry a message?"

There was complete silence. Every man knew that such a trip would mean almost certain death. The Comanches were cunning. They would have the caravan surrounded to see that no one left for that very purpose. A full

moon hung over the plains, making every object stand out distinctly. A messenger would certainly be seen by Comanche sentinels; Comanche ponies were far more fleet than any horse in the caravan.

While the men thus hesitated, each with his own thoughts, one of the wealthy Spaniards offered a reward in gold and silver to any one who would carry a message through that night. Another Spaniard doubled the amount. A third tripled it. And so it grew in size until it was too much wealth for some of the young-bloods to resist.

A few of them agreed to go, and that no time might be lost they leaped upon their horses and set off at once.

In less than an hour they were flying back into camp, at top speed, crying breathlessly that they had all but run into the very midst of a large band of Indians.

"Where? How far off? How many?" cried the traders.

The messengers nesitated, looked a little sheepish, and finally admitted that they saw something they *thought* were Indians.

The Spaniards increased their reward, and another small party volunteered. *They* were not

to be frightened by clumps of sagebrush or groups of prairie wolves.

In no more than a half hour they were back, tumbling breathless off their horses.

"Indians! Hundreds of Indians!" they cried.

Questioned closely, they had to confess that they *thought* they saw them.

Old Wallace and his comrade Barnes, who had spent many years on the plains, were disgusted that these younger men had no more nerve.

"Afraid of their shadows!" spat out Old Wallace. "Give me an' Barnes the best hosses in camp, an' the men we choose, an' we'll go. An' we won't turn back, neither!"

The Spaniards had by far the finest horses, and they offered them readily. And Old Wallace chose his men. The first he asked for were the six Pueblos; next was Workman; then a few others.

Well supplied with arms and ammunition, they leaped upon their horses and were off, flying across the moonlit prairie. Already too much of the night had been wasted. As they rode silently and swiftly, with the keen-sighted Pueblos in advance, they kept an alert lookout in all directions; but all they saw were occa-

sional lone buffalo bulls grazing at a distance, or a small wolf-pack racing off across the plains.

They had covered about thirty miles when they came to the top of a bluff and halted to reconnoiter. And as they drew rein, a horse came up the bluff, neighing as it approached the other horses, answering readily when a Pueblo whistled to it softly.

"Injuns!" whispered Workman. "An Injun camp is near!"

One of them must do some scouting to learn its position and size while the others waited. It would be dangerous. Who would volunteer?

Without a word, Old Wallace threw his reins to Barnes, slid silently to the ground and, creeping to the edge of the bluff, looked over.

A wide plain lay beneath him. The moon long ago had gone down, but by the bright starlight he saw, silhouetted against the plain, thousands of dark objects, some of which distinctly were horses, the others no doubt Indian tents, and it must be a huge encampment to be so widescattered. There was no sign of a fire, but that was not strange, for he knew that Indians put out their fires after eating.

He stole back to the waiting men.

"Injuns," he said, "by the thousands!"

Barnes, not satisfied, must see for himself. Crawling cautiously to the edge of the bluff, he too saw the thousands of dark objects scattered wide on the plain, here and there in large groups none of which were far apart. He slipped noiselessly back to his comrades.

"The light's kinda dim, but I'd sure say they was Injuns," he reported.

Workman slid off his horse and crept forward. He, too, must see.

"Injuns tents and Injun hosses," he muttered as he looked long at them.

To make certain, however, the six Pueblos had to be sent to the edge of the bluff to have a look. They had scarcely peered over before they hastened back with one dread word:

"Comanches!"

What should they do now? Turn back they would not. To circle wide to right or left would mean the loss of much valuable time; daylight was rapidly approaching.

"Anybody want to turn back?" asked Old Wallace.

"No!" came an emphatic chorus of whispers.

"Then, here's my plan. We'll creep up close, then make a wild dash through 'em."

The Pueblos again took the lead, for when

the time came for the charge, their hair-raising yells would send momentary fear into the heart of the sleeping Comanches, for they would recognize the war-cry of the Pueblos; and by the time the enemy was fully aroused, the white men hoped to be through them, making a wild dash for the Arkansas. They hoped, also, that the yelling might stampede the horses and frighten them off: the Comanches could do little without their mounts.

Riding noiselessly down the bluff, breathless with excitement, all guns in readiness, these brave men reached the dim plain and approached as close as they dared. Then, the Pueblos giving the signal, all let out demoniacal yells and dashed forward, the war-cry of the Pueblos being terrible to hear, the traders helping with all their lusty lungs.

A roar as of thunder greeted them, and the whole plain seemed to be alive and moving violently. Thousands upon thousands of buffaloes and wild horses, stampeded by the yelling, went racing across the plain.

The dreaded "Indian encampment" was an immense herd of buffaloes, the "Indian ponies" wild horses by the thousands. They had come here for water, and were quietly grazing or

sleeping when the traders saw their dark forms from the edge of the bluff.

"Haw! Haw! Haw!" roared Old Wallace. He could enjoy a joke, even on himself.

In fine spirits now, they hastened on, urging their tired horses forward, knowing they must lose no time.

It was past noon when they reached Chouteau's Island—only to find that Major Riley had gone. There was every evidence, however, that he had spent the preceding night there; so he could not be far ahead. Once more putting spur to their drooping horses, they plodded on, and reached him late that day. When he heard their message he camped at once to await the arrival of the harassed caravan.

The traders back with the wagons, knowing that Old Wallace would get through or die in the attempt, had set out shortly after he left, lashing their mules as the wagons jolted over the rough Trail, making all speed to reach the American troops before the Comanches attacked. As usual, scouts were sent well in advance, to give the alarm so that the wagons might "form" if need be.

But no danger came, and they found a small guard of soldiers waiting at Chouteau's Island to

escort them to Major Riley's camp. There, after resting the animals, Captain Viscarra and his men turned back, and the traders set off gaily for Independence, with no fear of further molestation, for the Indians would not attack while the American soldiers rode with them.

CHAPTER VI

THE TRAIL OF DANGER

TWO grizzled trappers came stalking into Independence in the early spring of 1831. They had spent so many years in the Rocky Mountains, trapping, hunting, dodging starvation, fighting grizzlies, killing Indians, that they felt equal to tackling the world.

"Oh, yes," an irritated trader conceded, when Sublette and Smith had been boasting of their prowess, "you fellers know the mountains. But when it comes to travelin' with a lot o' wagons, like we do, over the Trail——"

"Take a caravan to Santa Fé?" laughed Sublette. "Why, that's child's play!"

"Huh!" grunted the trader. "Easy to talk!"

The annual caravan was already beginning its preparations to set out in May, when the grass would be high enough to assure the animals plenty of food.

"We'll show 'em," said Sublette to his partner Smith. "We'll start in April, get there before they do, and take all the cream off the sale!"

With this lure they persuaded a number of greenhorns to join their venture, and when they set out from the Missouri at the end of April they had twenty heavily laden wagons in their train. This driving over the prairie, lounging about the noon fire, camping at night under the stars, seemed to the two trappers a gay holiday after their dangers and hardships in the mountains. And think of the Santa Fé gold at the end of the Trail!

They had no difficulty until they reached Walnut Creek. There they camped while Smith and two of the men went out after antelope. Following tracks up the stream, they came upon a fine elk grazing on the buds of a young tree. So intent were they, so heedless of danger, that the dozen Pawnees hiding behind cottonwood trunks could have killed them all. But the Pawnees, shouting exultantly, rushed out of the timber, and a rain of arrows spattered about the men.

"Behind trees!" cried Smith, and the three dodged to shelter, keeping up a running fight as they leaped from tree to tree, moving always down the creek, nearer camp, firing as fast as they could load.

Four Indians had been killed when an arrow

struck one of the men through the heart just as the Pawnees turned and fled.

Smith and his comrade carried the slain man into camp, and there they buried him in the hasty Trail manner. They dug a deep trench, placed him in it wrapped in a blanket, piled logs on top of the body to keep the wolves from digging it up, threw in the earth and leveled the ground over, then built a campfire on top of it, that the ashes might deceive the Pawnees, keep them from suspecting a grave and digging up the body to get the scalp.

They started off the next morning not quite so sure of themselves; aware that danger might lie even on this well-marked Trail across the broad prairies. And at last they came to the Cimarron Crossing. Before them lay the Long Route, westward along the Arkansas and then southward across the mountains; and the Cimarron or Dry Route through the desert, much shorter, but far more difficult.

There was no hesitation on Captain Sublette's part. What was a mere desert to a man who had conquered the mountains?

"The Cimarron Route, boys," he said.

And so they crossed the Arkansas and set off into a waterless stretch of sand. Up to that point

the Trail had been easy to follow; but now there was no Trail; there was only a maze of buffalo paths, leading here and there, crossing and re-crossing.

Taking their directions by sun and stars, they wandered on and on. There was no grass for the animals; no water for the men or the beasts; nothing but sand—sand and intolerable heat. After four days of torture, they believed they must all surely perish from thirst.

"What'll we do?" moaned Sublette, as humble now, in his agony of thirst, as his lowliest teamster.

"These buffalo paths lead to water—somewhere," replied Smith. "I'll follow one till I come to it."

"This is Comanche country," his partner warned him.

"I know. But we'll all die if we don't get water. It's worth tryin'."

And so the courageous Captain Smith set out alone, following a path that led through the twisting sand hills and brought him at last to the edge of a stream. It was the Cimarron. He ran joyfully through the fringe of greasewood bushes—and found not a drop of water! The sandy bed of the river was as dry as the sur-

rounding desert. For a moment he was stunned; but then he remembered that often a trickle of water can be found beneath the surface, and he fell to his knees and began scooping a hole in the loose sand. To his joy he came upon water, more precious to him than all the Santa Fé gold. He leaned over eagerly to drink.

And in that instant a dozen arrows entered his body, and a yelling band of Comanches, who had been lying in ambush, watching his every movement, rushed forward to get his scalp.

Weakly, knowing that he was dying, Smith pulled his guns and killed two Indians before he dropped back dead. The story of his plucky end was told by the Comanches who murdered him.

After intolerable hardships, such as he had never known in all his mountain experience, Captain Sublette somehow managed to steer his little caravan into Santa Fé. But not before they had been set upon by a hostile band of Blackfeet and Gros Ventres, who were down in that country on a horse-stealing expedition. Fortunately, Sublette had lived a while among the Blackfeet, and when he called out to them in their own tongue, and one of the warriors recognized him as a friend of their old chief, the Indians with-

drew, permitting the caravan to proceed along the difficult and dangerous Trail.

A month after Sublette and Smith had set out from the Missouri on their foolhardy expedition, the regular caravan, consisting of nearly a hundred wagons and two cannon, a four-pounder and a six-pounder, got under way. It was captained by a merchant named Stanley, but its leading spirit was Josiah Gregg, a veteran Santa Fé trader.

All went well until they crossed Cow Creek and camped in the valley beyond. This was Indian country, where either Pawnees or Comanches might be expected, and every one kept on the alert. They had had their early evening meal and were lounging about the grass, enjoying their pipes, when one of the traders who had gone down to the creek came racing breathlessly back.

"Injuns! Injuns!" he cried.

"To arms!" shouted several; and the men sprang to their weapons.

A wailing moan, as of the most terrible agony, reached them from the timber across the creek.

"It's one o' our men! They've scalped him!" cried some one, and the entire company rushed to the rescue, leaving the camp unprotected.

"Come on back, you greenhorns!" yelled an old-timer. "That war only the howl of a wolf that's smelled our buffalo-bones a-boilin'!"

The wail reached them again, and this time they recognized it. As they came, laughing a little sheepishly, back to the wagons, the trader who had given the alarm admitted that the "Injuns" he saw must have been this same gray wolf skulking through the bushes.

Just before they approached The Caches there was excitement of another kind. They ran into a den of rattlesnakes. The prairie was alive with them, hundreds or thousands of the reptiles crawling in every direction. The wagons were now driving four abreast, and a halt had to be called until a path could be cleared, lest the rattlesnakes bite the mules. Such a scrambling, a popping of guns, a wielding of wagon-tools!

Again they were on their way, and at last they crossed the Arkansas and entered upon the fifty miles of waterless desert that lay between that river and the Cimarron. Lumbering along through the sand, they suddenly saw far ahead of them a group of horsemen carrying a flag. At first they thought it must be Sublette's party; but as the horsemen approached they discovered that

it was a band of Sioux—down in the Comanche country to trade or steal. The flag was a peace symbol, to show their friendship for the whites —the whites outnumbering them four to one. They warned Gregg's party of trouble ahead, for a large band of hostile Blackfeet and Gros Ventres were spread across the valley of the Cimarron, directly in the path of the caravan.

This was alarming news, and as the Sioux passed on, the leaders of the wagon-train called the men for a council. Those new to the Trail were given fresh instructions as to what should be done in case of an attack; all were cautioned to inspect arms and see that their supply of ammunition was ample.

They reached the Cimarron one bright June morning, keeping a sharp lookout for the Indians; and as they halted while men ran to the stream to see whether it was dry or water was to be had, up out of a ravine some distance ahead a hundred warriors appeared, riding slowly toward the caravan.

"Form!" shouted Stanley, and as the word went swiftly down the line the wagons were driven into position, hub to hub, with the mules on the inside. In spite of the warning the Sioux had given them, and the caution from their lead-

ers, many of the men were ridiculously unprepared. Their guns were unloaded, their flints missing, their powder-horns empty.

"My ramrod's lost!" wailed one.

"Lend me some powder!" begged another.

"I've got no balls!"

"I've rammed down a ball without powder!"

The Indians had increased to fully a thousand, the warriors all armed and in war-paint, but, so far, they had made no move toward an attack.

For several minutes both sides, lined up five hundred yards apart, watched each other warily. The two hundred white men, many of them new to the Trail, were eager for battle in spite of the difference in numbers.

"Our wagons can't move on," one man argued, "while they block the way. Let's scatter 'em."

Stanley and Gregg agreed. And in military formation, to the beating of a drum and the blowing of a fife, guns ready for instant action, they grimly marched forward, waiting only for the word to open fire.

The Indians were *delighted!* They thought the men were saluting them! They were charmed with the music, vastly pleased with the spectacle of the marching men, their guns aglitter in the

sun. Far from being frightened, they began to dance and sing joyously.

The head chief, lighting his calumet, calmly came forward, taking ceremonial whiffs as he approached. Stanley was not to be outdone. He met him half-way, accepted the pipe, and took a few whiffs. Then, having no interpreter, he asked the chief in sign language to have his warriors separate so the wagons could proceed. This was done, and the surprised teamsters rushed back, to get the caravan on its way.

As they proceeded, with the warriors keeping pace beside and behind them, they saw in the valley below, the Blackfeet and Gros Ventre village of about three thousand, including squaws and children. The traders knew it would be the height of bad manners, indicating hostility, not to smoke the calumet over a ceremonial fire, so they drove up and camped near the village. The fire was built, the head chiefs and the leaders of the caravan sat around it, and in silence the long pipe was passed from one to the other. This important ceremony being completed, the caravan was soon on its way once more.

To the annoyance of the white men, the Indians kept constantly with them. When the

traders camped, the Indians pitched their lodges not far away; when the traders were ready to move on, the Indians were astir, and by the time the wagoners had their teams harnessed, the squaws had "geared" their dogs and loaded them with the lodge-poles and covers, with babies and other light objects, also ready to be on the move. Unable to converse with the Indians, the traders could get no explanation.

Then suddenly they realized why the Indians were clinging to them so closely. They had smoked the calumet over the peace-fire, but had not "sealed" the treaty with presents! Halting immediately, they distributed knives and mirrors and other goods; and at once the Blackfeet and Gros Ventres, well content, fell back.

A few days later Gregg's party halted for a noon rest, and had scarcely brought the last wagon to a stop when a hundred Comanches were sighted about a half-mile away, coming at full tilt, yelling their war-whoops and firing old-fashioned *fusils*. The caravan quickly corralled, the six-pounder was brought into play; but the Comanches retired after their first swift charge. They had come to stampede the stock; and seeing it safe in the corral, they had no desire to fight a well-armed force twice their size.

These were the Comanches who had killed Sublette's partner Smith.

The Trail along the Cimarron, with Comanches, Kiowas and others lying in wait for passing caravans, was so dangerous for small parties that traders had to wait until a suitable number of men were ready to take the Trail. This caused them much inconvenience and loss. Often, they must wait for weeks, until the regular caravan was ready.

In 1832 twelve brave men decided to go through alone. Mounted on mules, they set out from Santa Fé, carrying their baggage and about ten thousand dollars on pack-mules. For the first hundred miles or more they followed the regular Santa Fé Trail. Then, to avoid the Cimarron Route, they turned east along the Canadian. This unmarked trail, largely sand hills covered with chaparral, deeply crossed with small ravines, would have been almost impossible for wagons, and it was difficult for mules.

The traders had scarcely got into the worst of it when about a hundred Kiowas and Comanches appeared. The Indians had no desire to fight, but they were determined to secure the mules and all the fine things they expected to find in the baggage. They could wait. Ahead

lay a stretch of timber, where a few warriors could capture the mules and yet have tree-trunks for protection from the white men's guns.

With this in mind, the strange cavalcade moved on—the twelve traders, each leading one or two pack-mules; one hundred warriors, gaudy in paint and feathers, some in fringed and beaded buckskin, riding on each side of the mule-train and in the rear.

One warrior grew impatient. He saw a chance to cut off two mules. He dashed forward, with his knife gleaming; and the next moment he lay dead. But the trader who had shot him fell with an Indian bullet through his heart, and in the brief conflict, in which a half-dozen Indians toppled from their ponies, another trader was killed. The Indians then drew back for a powwow, a council of war.

The traders hastily took the packs off the mules and piled them in a circle for a barricade; then, behind this uncertain protection, they scooped out a pit in the sand with their hands; and there they were crowded together when the Indians came racing back for the attack. In the first charge a few warriors fell dead, but no damage was done to the whites. This caused the Kiowas and Comanches to be more wary; they

were afraid to approach too close to the Americans.

Their quick charges continued intermittently, however, and in the fighting all the mules were killed. The traders were soon beginning to suffer from desert thirst. There was no fear of starving, because they could eat the mules; but the lack of water was serious.

For nearly thirty-six hours the ten traders were crowded together in the uncomfortable sand-pit, while the Indians waited, knowing that thirst would eventually drive them out. The second night came, and the men decided to make a dash for freedom under cover of darkness. The man who owned the ten thousand dollars said that all might have as much as they could carry. They took a very little of it, and buried the remainder in the pit. Then they crawled out noiselessly, one by one, and crept across the sand. So silent were they, so cautious was every movement, that they were undetected; and when daylight came and their escape was discovered, the Indians were too busy plundering the baggage to care about the men. Thus they were not pursued.

The dangers along the Cimarron Route were no more numerous than those on the Arkansas.

Indians continued their attacks at their favorite haunts, Cow Creek, the Walnut, Pawnee Rock, Pawnee Fork.

One summer two trappers who had had a successful season in the mountains were returning with their furs, walking beside their heavily laden mules the many weary miles across the plains. They met with no trouble until they reached the Santa Fé Trail near Pawnee Rock. Then, from out of the cottonwood fringe that lined the river, there came racing toward them sixty mounted Pawnees, in full war regalia of paint and feathers, their shrill "Pawnee whistle" ringing exultantly.

Quickly the trappers threw up their rifles and fired, killing two Indians. The Pawnees halted, for a moment only, until the dead could be carried off. And in that brief space the trappers rushed with their mules to the top of Pawnee Rock and took up their post, determined to sell their lives dearly. On one side they were protected by the face of the rock, which was an almost vertical cliff; the other three sides were rolling hill which any horse could climb. They picketed their mules where they could protect them against stampede, saw to their supply of powder and balls and waited grimly.

In a moment the Pawnees dashed forward and began circling the rock, whooping wildly as they raced, closing in nearer and nearer. Most of the warriors had guns as well as bows and arrows, so they wished to get within rifle-range. Then they threw themselves on the offside of their ponies, and from behind this protection let loose a hail of arrows and bullets, shooting under the horse's neck, not once slackening their pace.

This first onslaught did no damage; but the cool aim of the trappers brought two Indians low; and when the Pawnees stopped to carry off the slain warriors, four more of them journeyed to the happy hunting-ground.

Night was approaching and the Indians withdrew, leaving, however, a cordon of sentinels around the rock, well out of rifle-range, to see that the white men did not escape in the darkness.

It was a terrible night to the trappers. They had a little food, but no water; and to add to their troubles the mules became almost unmanageable with thirst. The river was only a few yards away, and the frantic animals could smell the water; but for either of the men to have attempted to get it would have meant certain death.

In desperation they watched the dawn approach. Their great fear was that the Indians would set fire to the prairie; the grass was tall and very dry, and with the dawn wind that was rising there could be little hope for them.

"The poor mules!" bemoaned one of the men, thinking of his faithful animals even when he was in such danger himself; they would perish miserably in a prairie fire, he knew. "Maybe if I picketed 'em further down on the side of the rock, out o' the wind, they'd have a chance."

"Too dangerous to try. The Injuns'll be here in a minute."

But the trapper was already crawling on his hands and knees over to the mules. He led them one by one farther down the rock, picketed them securely, then pulled up the grass for a large space around them.

"Quick! They're comin'!" shouted his comrade.

The trapper scrambled up the rock, to see the dark forms of the Indians dashing out of the trees along the river-bank. But it was not for a charge this time. They had lost too many warriors the day before. They, too, had realized what a prairie fire would mean to the men trapped on the grass-covered rock. And as they

circled in the gray dawn they dropped flaming torches; then quickly rode off into the ravine, beyond the danger zone.

In a moment the prairie was ablaze—a seething, crackling mass of flames and smoke and whirling ashes being swept rapidly onward before the high wind.

The trappers, aghast, threw themselves down where a projection of the great rock might afford a little protection. Midnight blackness at once enveloped them; the smoke choked, almost suffocated them; the terrific heat lashed them in wind-borne waves. Then through the darkness they saw a great sheet of flame rushing toward them. Nothing could save them but a miracle.

The miracle happened. The wind veered, the flame wavered, twisted, turned off almost at right angles. The darkness soon became less dense, and they knew the smoke was passing.

When they were able to crawl out from where they lay, they found themselves in the midst of a blackened and ash-gray prairie, with fire still spurting up here and there, and a long line of flame traveling on and on, in a beautiful, terrible wave. Only a few feet from the rock lay the charred bodies of two Pawnees and their horses; they had probably attempted to approach near

enough, in the darkness and confusion, to capture the mules, and had been caught in the swift-running fire.

The mules, protected from the wind-blown flame, had come through remarkably well. Jubilant over their escape, the trappers were preparing to set out without delay to get the mules to water, when to their dismay a dozen Pawnees dashed out of the ravine and circled the rock. These were only guards, to keep the white men from escaping while the band thought up some other fiendish scheme.

All through the morning the trappers waited tensely. Their suffering mules had now, with the grass charred, neither food nor water. To allay their own thirst the men were chewing their moccasin-thongs.

Noon passed; the hours dragged by; and at three o'clock the Pawnees came. The trappers stared amazed. They saw no Indians, but a living breastworks approaching! The Pawnees had tied a long string of their ponies close together, head to tail, then covered them thickly with branches of trees they had spent the whole morning in gathering, and on top of these had thrown heavy buffalo-robes. Sheltered by this curious, advancing fortification, the Indians

came afoot, their arrows and guns ready. They were well protected from the fire of those two marksmen whose every shot had brought down a warrior; at last they could come within rifle-range without fear of losing any more Pawnee braves.

The trappers, their lives at stake, were equal even to this unusual emergency.

"You kill the third pony; I'll down the sixth," said one of them calmly.

"That'll sure stampede 'em," replied his comrade.

Their rifles were fired even before the strange breastworks came to a halt.

The two ponies fell in their tracks, and before they could be cut loose the entire line stampeded and went racing across the prairie, wild with fright, bumping and falling against one another, spilling their strange cargo. And before the surprised Indians could fall back to safety, the trappers' rifles had barked four more times, and four more warriors lay dead.

Although the battle had now waged for two days and two nights, still the trappers were unharmed. To their consternation, however, they found they had only a few more rounds of ammunition. If they could hold out till darkness

they would try to escape even through the cordon of watchful sentinels, and knowing that at dawn they would certainly be tracked down.

The sun had set and the prairie sky was flaming color when a wolf-call sounded from the ravine, and the Pawnee sentinels guarding the rock turned and raced off as fast as their ponies could take them.

The trappers wondered what devilment was coming next. And then they could scarcely believe their eyes. Winding down the Trail from the east came a long caravan of covered wagons. It seemed to them that all the wagons in the world were in that train that extended on and on, lost in the purple dusk. The Pawnees had sighted it and fled.

Thus the two brave men were saved.

Sometimes trappers returning to civilization after one or more seasons in the mountains encountered dangers of quite a different nature along the Trail. Two hungry men were bringing in their catch of beaver-pelts, and as they approached the Santa Fé Trail their eyes were kept open, not for Indians, but for buffalo. They had had no fresh meat, except a few cottontails, since they left the mountains, and as they got down into the foothills their mouths

watered for a juicy hump-steak, or that great delicacy, a buffalo-tongue.

At last they saw a small herd grazing quietly, and set out at once to bring down a fat young cow. Soon they became separated. One of the trappers, skirting a hill covered with small pine-trees, crept up to the herd and killed an unsuspecting cow. In great glee, he laid his rifle on the ground, took out his hunting-knife, and began to cut up his game. Intent in his work, he was startled by a deep growl, and looked up to see a grizzly bear rushing upon him.

In a split second the trapper was up a small pine-tree. The grizzly sniffed a moment, then fell to eating, apparently much satisfied with this tender cow so conveniently killed and cut up for him. Replete at last, instead of ambling off to his den, he stretched himself full-length between the remnant of the buffalo and the pine-tree, that he might guard the meat from the wolves on one hand and from the two-legged enemy on the other.

An hour passed, with the trapper in his uncomfortable perch. Believing the bear asleep, he attempted to slip noiselessly down. But a growl and a restless tossing of the massive head showed him the grizzly very much on the alert.

Another long wait. And at last his partner found him, killed the sleepy grizzly, and enabled the trapper to come down from his perch in the pine. Never again would he become separated from his rifle!

There were blizzards, cyclones, terrific hailstorms, "with hailstones larger than hen's eggs"; there were cloudbursts that flooded the prairie, thunder-gusts in which the terrific wind capsized the wagons, snow that drifted high. But these were elemental dangers, which man long ago learned to combat. It was the lurking Indians, their sudden attacks, their unvarying hostility, that made the Santa Fé Trail a perilous highway, a trail of constant danger.

CHAPTER VII

BAD MEN AND BANDITS

A LITTLE prairie town, sprawled along the bank of the Missouri, became an important point on the Santa Fé Trail. It was known in 1843 as Westport Landing, and bore no resemblance to its present dignity and beauty as Kansas City. But however crude it may have been, in those early days, it was not without notoriety.

Traders, purchasing supplies in St. Louis, carried them by steamboat to Westport Landing, and there loaded them into covered wagons for the long trek by land. On the return Trail these same men carried fortunes in gold and silver, and often had to wait here for the boat to convey them to St. Louis.

All waterfront towns in those days harbored gangs of lawless ruffians who lived by preying upon others. Westport Landing was no exception. Some of the worst desperadoes in the State congregated there; and when they found it too difficult to rob the traders and escape with-

out detection by the vigilant citizens, they jumped upon their horses and rode out beyond the Missouri frontier, to lie in wait along the Trail and hold up any small caravan luckless enough to be unprotected.

One especially ruthless band of these land-pirates was headed by John McDaniel, who had drifted up to the prairie port from Texas. He kept a confederate in Santa Fé to send him swift word when a caravan which promised a good haul set out from that town.

Early in April, 1843, a half-breed came racing along the Trail on his swift Indian pony, entered Westport Landing quietly and sought out John McDaniel. His message came tumbling out in broken English. An immensely wealthy Mexican, Señor Don Antonio José Chavez, was on his way north with several thousand dollars in gold and silver, and he had almost no escort! He was even then across the border, well within the United States, and in a few days more he would reach the Missouri frontier.

McDaniel realized the necessity for haste. Murder might have to be done, and in Missouri the citizens would not let the crime go unpunished. Kansas, however, was a wild, Indian

country, where no one knew or cared what happened. The hold-up must be in Kansas.

Quickly calling his band of cut-throats together, they set out, fifteen in all, following the Trail till they came to Cow Creek, and there they lay in hiding among the willows and the cottonwood-trees.

Señor Chavez was a leading merchant of Albuquerque, and one of the richest men in New Mexico. There had been many rumors of Texas bandits waiting along the Trail to pounce upon any Mexican who came along; but Chavez scorned these, and fearlessly set out from Santa Fé with only five servants and a boy, his outfit consisting of but two wagons and his private coach. He carried with him several thousand dollars, to use in purchasing his supplies in St. Louis, planning to leave the coach and wagons at Westport Landing in charge of the servants while he and the boy went on by steamboat.

For three or four weeks they traveled leisurely. During the bitterly cold weather of March many of the mules perished and one of the wagons had to be abandoned along the way. Thus when in early April they came to Cow Creek, one of the usual camping-places, there were only the coach and one wagon.

Even before they halted, the boy slid out of the back of the covered wagon and lay flat among the bushes along the creek-bank, ready to drink out of the stream. This saved his life, for a moment later McDaniel and his cut-throats were upon the little caravan, and in the excitement they failed to see the terrified lad who was wriggling farther and farther away from them.

The five servants were murdered at once. Chavez was saved to be tortured into telling where his gold was. When its hiding-place was disclosed, there came the question of shooting him. The murder of his servants was nothing; but killing a man so well known and important as Señor Chavez was quite a different matter. Each bandit wanted some one else to do it.

"We'll draw lots," decided McDaniel.

While they were doing so, Chavez pleaded, threatened, offered huge bribes. But all to no avail. The executioner chosen, the Mexican was killed in cold blood, and his body thrown with the coach and wagon into a small ravine. Many of the horses, stampeded by the shooting, had run off. The murderers piled the booty upon the remaining animals, and, well pleased with their haul, set off along the Trail to return to their waterfront hangout at Westport Land-

ing, which they would reach in three or four days.

The Mexican boy, terrified by what he had witnessed, lay in hiding until the murderers were gone. Then, with twilight to shield him, he hastened off to where he saw one of the stampeded horses now quietly grazing. With its aid he made his way as rapidly as he could across the prairie, and came to Fort Leavenworth, where he poured out the tale of the crime. Within an hour a detachment of United States troops, guided by the boy, was on the trail of the murderers. They surprised them at dawn two days later, and in a brief fight killed one and captured most of the others, taking them to St. Louis, where some were hanged, the others imprisoned.

The rumor, wide-spread in Santa Fé, that Texans were waiting along the Trail to rob caravans belonging to Mexicans was not unfounded.

Until 1836 Texas had been part of Mexico; but after the Alamo and other atrocities she severed herself and became the Republic of Texas. Not until nine years later, 1845, was she admitted to the United States, and in the meantime she suffered much from Mexicans along her southern border. The frontier between Texas

and New Mexico was very indefinite, both claiming the same territory.

Texas had her eye upon all land as far west as the Rio Grande. That would include the city of Santa Fé. The territory was sparsely settled and therefore could easily be taken; so a fine scheme was hatched. A trading expedition would go to Santa Fé—ostensibly to blaze a new and shorter trail than the old one from Missouri and thus divert much of that trade; but the real reason was to spy out the land and secure it if possible.

The Texans had learned, from many sources, that New Mexico was ripe for revolt, that most of her citizens were eager to shake off Santa Ana's yoke and join Texas in her independence. If this were true, when the expedition reached Santa Fé it would hoist the Texas flag over the governor's palace, and that was all there would be to it. But should the situation be different, the Texans had come only as innocent traders, of course. To be sure, there were three hundred well-trained militia along; but was it not known that the traders must pass through the dangerous country of Comanches and Caygüas, "where a man hardly dares go out to catch his horse without a rifle and pair of pistols about him"?

This First Texas Santa Fé Expedition, 1841, marching across the Texas plains and the dreary wastes of New Mexico, traveling the Old Santa Fé Trail for the last stretch, met with nothing but disaster. A traitor in their midst revealed their plans, and although nothing could be proved, Armijo, Governor of New Mexico, was only too willing to believe them guilty, that he might expend upon them some of his bitter hatred of all Texans. Not content with imprisoning them, he resorted to the most cruel and barbarous torture. Some had their ears cut off and were then trussed up like fowls and shot in the back; some were given their freedom and shot down as they turned to go; many spent long months of torture chained in prison dungeons.

Not easily were Texans to forget this fiendish work of Armijo. The Republic was too new and small to declare war, for it would mean fighting all of Mexico; but at least she could harass the border towns, and, striking nearer home, bands of Texans could lie in wait among the sand hills along the Trail and rob and destroy every caravan owned by Mexicans.

The long wagon-train that left Independence in the early summer of 1843, after the Chavez murder, was an unusually rich one, belonging

entirely to Governor Armijo and a few other wealthy Mexicans. Fearing that Texans might be tempted to seize so rich a prize, Captain Cooke, of the United States Army, with four troops of dragoons, was detailed to escort it as far as the border, that there might be no trouble within the United States. Beyond the border the caravan would be at the mercy of Comanches and Apaches, as well as Texans should they be out for retaliation and plunder. Realizing this, the captain of the caravan had had the forethought to hire one hundred Mexicans as a protection in the Indian country, although he knew that, as fighters, the Mexicans would prove but a feeble guard.

When they reached the camping-ground on Walnut Creek, they learned, to their consternation, that Texans were indeed waiting to rob and probably murder them as soon as they were well across the border, in New Mexico.

To go on alone was unthinkable. The situation was a desperate one. While they sat about the campfire discussing it, a lone rider came galloping along the Trail, greeting them as he rode up and dismounted. Although small in size, he was known far and wide as one of the most fearless and resourceful young men on

the plains. His name, the Mexicans knew, was Kit Carson.

Here was the solution of their troubles! They would send this fleet messenger, this dependable young man, to Governor Armijo in Santa Fé with a plea for troops to be rushed to the border to meet them and escort them in.

They offered Carson three hundred dollars in advance to carry their message through; and with no hesitation he accepted. Three hundred dollars was a good deal of money to him at that time; even more alluring was the thrill that lay in outwitting the Texans, the Comanches and the Apaches; but perhaps what most influenced him was the desire to be helpful to these men in real distress.

His comrade, Dick Owens, who shared in many of his exploits, was a little farther along the Trail, with Captain Cooke and the dragoons. Carrying the letter for Governor Armijo, these two set out together post-haste for Bent's Fort, which lay on the Old Trail about half the distance between Walnut Creek and Santa Fé. At Bent's Fort Carson learned that the bloodthirsty Utes were on the war-path against the whites and were camped along the Trail to the south, waiting for the scalp of any white man who ap-

proached. Dick Owens refused to go farther, and Colonel Bent tried to dissuade Kit Carson from the trip.

"It'll be suicide," he argued. "You'll never get through the Utes."

But Carson had agreed to take the message, and no danger could make him break his word. The safety of the Mexicans, their very lives, depended upon him. He would get through or die in the attempt.

Seeing his determination, Colonel Bent loaned him the swiftest horse in his stables and bade him godspeed. After all, he was Kit Carson. There was a bare chance.

Fleet of foot and tireless, Carson walked beside his horse for hours at a time, thus conserving its energy in case he should need to ride swiftly. As he sped along the dangerous Trail, with every sense alert, he saw ahead of him, spread among the low hills, an immense camp of Utes. Quickly falling back, lest a watchful sentinel spy him, he led his horse into a narrow, bush-covered ravine, and there he lay in hiding until well after dark; then, creeping out cautiously, he circled wide among the hills, and reached the Trail again far beyond the hostile Utes.

With this danger passed, and rightly believing that the Apaches and the Texans would be farther east, along the Cimarron Route, he raced his horse, sparing neither it nor himself, until he reached Taos. There the alcalde took his letter and speeded it on to Santa Fé by special messenger.

In Taos Carson learned that already a hundred soldiers had been sent along the Cimarron Route to meet the caravan, and Governor Armijo planned to leave at once with six hundred more. When Kit received an answer from Armijo, a letter which he was to take as swiftly as possible to the caravan to tell them that troops were on the way, he set out with a Mexican boy along the Old Trail, which passed Bent's Fort.

Knowing now the extent and position of the Ute camp, he felt confident of being able to dodge it. Perhaps this made him careless. As he and the boy, both walking and leading their horses, turned a bend in the Trail, four Ute warriors sprang from behind a boulder and started toward them.

"Mount quickly and escape!" whispered the brave fifteen-year-old Mexican. "I am a boy and perhaps the Indians will spare my life. Anyway, your life is more valuable than mine.

So make your escape quickly while I engage them."

For a moment Carson hesitated. It was important that he should get through with his message. But desert this courageous lad? Never!

"We will stand our ground together," he said, "and if we have to die, let us take with us each his warrior!"

The four Utes had now approached to within a few yards of them, and one, advancing with a smile, held out his hand. Instead of taking Carson's proffered hand, however, the Ute quickly grasped Kit's rifle. There was a brief tussle, the wiry plainsman forcing the Indian to let go his hold, while the Mexican boy stood by with his gun covering the four warriors.

The Utes began talking in a loud voice. "Some would ride by us," Kit said later in describing the scene, "examining their guns, opening their pans, and many other maneuvers to frighten us or to induce us to change our positions that they might kill us before we could return the fire. We watched them closely, determined that the first who raised his gun should be shot. After a half-hour, seeing but little hope of being able to kill us without losing two of themselves, they left."

And a few days later, after hard traveling, they reached Bent's Fort, where they learned that it was unnecessary to go farther, as the Texans, disarmed by Captain Cooke, had agreed to leave the caravan unmolested and return quietly to their homes.

The Texans had made this promise only because their thirst for revenge on the Mexicans had in part been appeased.

When they had learned that the immensely rich Mexican caravan was to pass along the Trail, they had decided immediately upon its plunder and destruction. Colonel Snively, a daring Texas plainsman, set out at once with about two hundred adventurers, some of whom had been prisoners in Santa Fé and were ripe for retaliation; and they were joined a few days later by Colonel Warfield, with a band of Texas rovers whose guns bore many notches.

When this formidable company reached the Trail, some distance south of the Arkansas, they discovered that a party of Mexicans—the hundred soldiers that Armijo had sent in advance—had already passed, going north. Putting spur to their swift ponies, the Texans soon overtook the soldiers, and opened fire even as they raced up. Surprised, the Mexicans were helpless.

Thirty were killed or badly wounded, and the rest taken prisoners, except one who snatched a Texas pony and managed to escape. He swiftly carried word of the massacre to General Armijo, who, leisurely on his way, had encamped with his large command a hundred and forty miles to the south. The cowardly Armijo, knowing the Texans would show him no mercy after the way he had treated their comrades, fled back to Santa Fé, leaving the Mexican caravan to its fate.

The Texans, with all the booty they could collect from the Mexican soldiers they had surprised, went into camp about ten miles below The Caches; and then Colonel Snively calmly crossed the Arkansas into the United States for a conference with Captain Cooke, commanding the American dragoons escorting the caravan. The Texans made no objection to being disarmed; for they had expected this, and had concealed their own excellent weapons in the sand hills about their camp, carrying only the very poor ones captured in the Mexican fray. Being assured that if they remained the caravan would wait under American protection until a suitable escort reached it from Santa Fé, Snively and his followers set out the next day

on the trail back to Texas, well satisfied with the damage they already had done.

This harassing of the Mexican caravans, and especially the murder of so important a man as Señor Chavez, led the notorious Santa Ana to issue a decree, late in 1843, closing the Santa Fé Trail to all commerce from the United States. At once a clamor of protest broke out. The merchants of Taos and Santa Fé insisted upon their right to purchase where they pleased. Mexico's hold upon this territory was none too secure, so Santa Ana was compelled to rescind the order; and the long lines of covered wagons once more appeared on the Trail in the spring of 1844.

Of all the outlaws who spread terror along the Santa Fé Trail, one of the most dreaded was a Cheyenne half-breed, Charles Bent. His father, Colonel Bent, of Bent's Fort, had had him educated in St. Louis; but this touch with civilization had merely trained his Indian brain to think more clearly, to plan his atrocities more cunningly, to cover up his tracks more thoroughly. He organized, in a semi-military way, a band known as the "Dog Soldiers," consisting of the most brutal and fiendish young bloods of the Cheyenne tribe, which Bent claimed as his

own, and a few white ruffians who were outcasts from their own race.

The half-breed's favorite plan was to hide his hundred or more Dog Soldiers somewhere near one of the usual camping-places along the Trail. When the caravan soon afterward drove up it would find a good-looking stranger lying on the ground apparently sound asleep. Bent would open his eyes, jump to his feet, and pretend that he was now well rested, but very hungry. This never failed, for the good-hearted traders insisted upon sharing their meal with him; and all the while that Bent was eating he was spying upon the size and strength of the caravan, and the amount of plunder. Then, with many thanks to his generous hosts, the pleasant stranger took his departure—making his way rapidly to his hidden band. The Dog Soldiers, led by the black-hearted Bent, then rushed back and murdered every man in the caravan, carrying off the booty and any wagons which might later be sold to the Cheyennes or other tribes.

The Government offered a reward of five thousand dollars for Bent, taken dead or alive. But he was too cunning to be caught. It was the Indians who finally broke up his band and brought him to his death. The Dog Soldiers

made a raid on a fine herd of horses belonging to the Kaws. In the fight that ensued, the Kaws killed many of the outlaws and so badly wounded Bent that he died a few days later. Without his leadership, the Dog Soldiers ceased their outrages, and the band was for a while broken up, the criminals going their various ways.

Neither Indians nor bandits could seriously affect the flow of commerce along the Santa Fé Trail, it seemed, for each year saw an increasing number of wagons, and a growing number of caravans.

And more and more frequently rumors reached the Missouri that New Mexicans were tiring of the rule of Armijo and the Dictator Santa Ana, and were longing to see the Stars and Stripes float over the palace in Santa Fé.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TAKING OF SANTE FÉ

IN the spring of 1842 Kit Carson felt a great longing to see the little log cabin in Missouri where he had spent his childhood. The traders at Bent's Fort were sending their annual caravan east, and Carson joined it. As he jogged along the Trail, he happily pictured the old home he so well remembered—the rude little cabin, the creek where he had dug a swimming-hole, the poplar-tree whose wind-tossed leaves had been his first targets, the woods where he had battled behind trees with imaginary Indians.

But, alas, many years had sped by; the frontier had pushed farther west; nothing at the old place was as he had known it in boyhood. Disappointed, he took passage on a steamboat down the Missouri, determined to return to the mountains with the first outfit that set out on the Santa Fé Trail.

It was his good luck on the boat to meet John C. Frémont, starting on an exploring expedition to the Rocky Mountains. Lucien Max-

well had already been engaged as hunter, and Kit Carson, whose name was well known to Frémont, was promptly hired as guide. One of his voluntary duties was to teach trail lore to a lad of nineteen and "a lively boy of twelve" Frémont was taking with him "for the development of mind and body such an expedition would give."

Leaving the Missouri, they followed the Santa Fé Trail for about two days, and then struck off to blaze a trail of their own over the broad prairies, directing their course toward the Rockies.

This was hostile country and an alert watch was kept. One morning a *voyageur* who had been scouting far off to one side, came racing up with the cry of, "Indians! Indians! I counted twenty-seven!"

A halt was quickly called; arms were examined; everything got in readiness. Kit Carson had set out at once, on a swift hunter, galloping across the prairie to ascertain the movements of the warriors, and their number.

"Mounted on a fine horse, without a saddle, and scouring bareheaded over the prairies, Kit was one of the finest pictures of a horseman I have ever seen," Frémont says. "A short time

enabled him to discover that the Indian war party of twenty-seven consisted of six elk who had been gazing curiously at our caravan as it passed by, and were now scampering off at full speed."

This expedition, which took Frémont far from the Trail, up into the Rockies, was but the first in which Kit Carson acted as his guide and scout. The succeeding few years saw them many times together upon the Santa Fé Trail, headed either toward or from the mountains; culminating in the expedition to California—then Mexican territory—as the war-clouds with Mexico were piling up.

The Republic of Texas had been constantly in strife with Mexico over the boundary-line, and when Texas was admitted into the United States, it promptly called upon the Union for protection from Santa Ana's forces. Early in 1846 war with Mexico was formally recognized; Congress voted ten million dollars; and an army of fifty thousand troops was raised. One of its three divisions, known as the Army of the West, was to travel the Santa Fé Trail and invade Mexico's most northern territories, New Mexico and California.

At the end of June, 1846, this Army of the

West, commanded by General Kearney, marched out of Fort Leavenworth, headed for Santa Fé. Indian spies hidden along the Trail saw a spectacular and formidable display as the army went winding over the prairie. There were five companies of dragoons, one troop of cavalry, two companies of infantry and two of light artillery; each of the long brass guns, the twelve-pound howitzers, the caissons, was drawn by four fine-looking dragoon horses. Closely behind the army came the regular caravan of traders—two long lines of covered wagons, oxen heaving at the yoke, a few private coaches drawn by mules.

A month after leaving Fort Leavenworth, Bent's Fort came into sight, and the army halted and went into encampment on the bank of the Arkansas, the traders keeping on, to pitch their camp just outside the fort walls. They were not permitted to continue their journey beyond this point without the army, lest their weapons and merchandise fall into the hands of the Mexicans.

Indian spies, wild with curiosity, hung constantly about the fort. Three Arapaho warriors came boldly inside, pretending to be traders. But Colonel Bent, watching their roving eyes and significant nods, was not to be fooled.

"We'll show 'em something!" he whispered to a group of frontiersmen who happened to be there.

Laughing to themselves, they took the three Arapahoes down to where the soldier encampment could be seen—a formidable sight indeed with its infantry, cavalry, artillery, widespread over the plain. The Indians, forgetful of their rôle as traders, fled back to their tribe with word of the incredible army, the mighty "white-faced warriors."

"Another Indian has come in," a spirited diary records, "believed to be a spy although he tells that he has been lost from his party. He is a warrior well armed with bow and arrows—a quiver full. His dress consists of a striped blanket wrapped around his body, a string of beads, and his long hair tied up with a piece of red cloth."

On the second of August General Kearney left the Arkansas for his spectacular march southward. Captain Cooke, accompanied by James Maguffin, an American with great influence among the citizens of New Mexico, was sent in advance with a proclamation addressed to the Mexican governor. Carrying a flag of truce, they were not molested, and when they

reached Santa Fé, Governor Armijo received them in conference in the old palace.

Kearney's proclamation meant nothing to him.

"I will myself lead an army of Mexico's finest soldiers against these *yanquis!*" he stormed. "How many of them are there? Bah! A mere sixteen hundred! I shall have six thousand! Submit to *yanqui* occupation of Santa Fé? Never!"

But all the time Armijo was talking so bravely, he was really alarmed, and even then was planning to flee to the safety of Old Mexico. The conference was scarcely concluded before he issued a document turning the reins of government over to an assistant "in case of death or during my absence."

In the meantime General Kearney's army was tramping steadily southward. It reached the Purgatoire River (which the traders called "Picketwire"); made its way over the difficult Raton Mountains; crossed the Cimarron Chico, and a day later the Ocaté; and so marched on, firing no gun, but gathering in Mexican prisoners as it went.

As the army halted on the banks of the Sapello, an American trader raced into camp on a spent

horse, with news for Kearney. He had come from Santa Fé. Wishing to help the American cause, he had spied upon the movement of the Mexican troops, and having got information of value had hastened with it to the oncoming army. The Mexican forces, he said, four thousand strong, were assembled at Apache Canyon—one of the most dangerous points on the Trail—about fifteen miles from Santa Fé, and were fortifying the canyon in such a way that it would mean certain death to any one attempting to pass through. He begged that the Americans make a detour.

News of this formidable force, led by Armijo himself, reached the army constantly as it continued the march. But Kearney refused to be frightened, refused to lose valuable time by circling wide to avoid the canyon.

His troops took the town of Las Vegas quietly; but word reached them there that a force of six hundred Mexicans was holding a narrow gorge two miles farther on and meant to oppose strenuously any further progress of the Americans.

Here, indeed, was news. Most of the soldiers were eager for a skirmish. They set out from Las Vegas in high spirits.

"The sun shone with dazzling brightness," says one of them; "the guidons and colors of each squadron, regiment, and battalion were for the first time unfurled. The drooping horses seemed to take courage from the gay array. The trumpeters sounded *To horse* with spirit, and the hills multiplied and reëchoed the call. All wore the aspect of a gala day; and, as we approached the gorge, where we expected to meet the enemy, we broke into a brisk trot, then into a full gallop, preceded by a squadron of horse. The gorge was passed, but no person seen.

"One by one the guidons were furled; the men looked disappointed."

They took San Miguel with no resistance, and the next day marched on toward Apache Canyon, rumors still reaching them of the four thousand Mexicans waiting there to annihilate them.

"About the middle of the day's march our two Pueblo Indians, previously sent in to sound the chief men of that formidable tribe, were seen in the distance, at full speed, with arms and legs both thumping into the sides of their mules at every stride. Something was now surely in the wind. The smaller and foremost of the two dashed up to the general, his face radiant with joy, and exclaimed, 'They are in the Canyon,

my brave, pluck up your courage and push them out!' As soon as his extravagant delight at the prospect of a fight, and the pleasure of communicating the news, had subsided, he gave a pretty accurate idea of Armijo's force and position."

A wave of excitement gripped the Americans. They were to fight at last! Sixteen hundred, fully exposed, against four thousand well entrenched!

They entered the canyon cautiously. Not a Mexican was to be seen; but the Americans watched alertly for the trap they were certain to encounter. Slowly they moved forward. Nothing happened. They emerged from the canyon warily. And still there was no sign of the enemy! With a mixture of jubilance and disappointment, they swept on along the Trail, entering Santa Fé as quietly as they had taken the other towns.

Governor Armijo had actually led a force of four thousand to Apache Canyon, believing that this display would intimidate the Americans. But when he learned that they were not to be frightened, that they were coming along the Santa Fé Trail as fast as they could march, he felt it high time for him to take to his heels.

The Americans had too many counts scored up against him. Deserting his army summarily, he fled to the south; and the soldiers, left leaderless, returned quietly to their homes.

The territory of New Mexico was taken without the loss of a man or the firing of a gun.

The army at once began the building of Fort Marcy, on a hill commanding Santa Fé; and when it was nearing completion, General Kearney, leaving a military force for its protection, and appointing Charles Bent the first American governor of New Mexico, set out to take California. On the way, Kit Carson intercepted him with the heartening news that California already had been wrested from the Mexicans by the explorer Frémont aided by the Pacific Squadron under Commodore Stockton. Kearney sent some of his troops back to Santa Fé; with the others, and with Kit Carson for guide, he hastened on to California to reinforce the Americans there.

Back in New Mexico revolt was seething. Scarcely had Kearney left Santa Fé before a few Mexicans began to stir up rebellion among the Pueblo Indians. They worked quietly, keeping the Pueblos half-crazed with a fiery Mexican brandy, feeding them with tales of the atrocities

the Americans would practice upon them once the war with Mexico was over and they could turn their attention upon the Indians.

The revolt spread, reaching the outlying settlements. By early December many influential Mexicans were holding secret meetings, and a date was chosen for a simultaneous uprising in which every American in New Mexico was to be massacred. On Christmas Eve the church-bell would ring at midnight. That would be the signal. The Americans would be off guard then, thinking only of the festive Christmas. The Mexicans would rush the plaza in Santa Fé, seize the artillery and point the guns into the streets, shooting down all who attempted to escape, while drink-crazed Indians effected a house-to-house slaughter, accompanied by Mexicans who would point out the victims.

So important a plot was guarded with the utmost secrecy. The men were sworn not to reveal it even to their wives. But a clever young girl, daughter of an American trapper, married to a Mexican, managed to cajole all the details out of her unsuspecting husband, and hastened with the report to Colonel Price, commander of the American forces in New Mexico. His prompt action suppressed the rebellion. But

the infuriated Mexicans merely postponed the revolt, guarding its secrecy all the more closely.

It broke out on January eighteenth. In Taos, where Governor Bent was visiting his family, a drunken mob of Pueblos and Mexicans took the war-path at dawn of the nineteenth, sought out the sheriff and murdered him; chopped up the prefect's body into small bits; and then rushed for the house where Governor Bent lay asleep. In the one-story adobe building were his wife and children and three women guests, including Mrs. Kit Carson.

The frenzied mob, yelling the terrible war-cry of the Pueblos, hammered on the door and the windows.

"The back door!" cried Mrs. Bent. "We must escape!"

"There's Indians there, too!" said one of the children, who had rushed to fasten the door when he was awakened by the first frightening war-whoop.

Adjoining them was another house, with only the adobe wall between. Frantically they began chopping a hole in this wall; and their neighbors, knowing their danger, were quickly helping from the other side. At last the opening was large enough. The children crawled

through; the women followed; but before Governor Bent could escape he had been wounded by a shot fired through a window. He tumbled through the opening, into the next room.

The Pueblos, catching a sight of his blood, were thrown into a wild frenzy. Nothing could stop them now. They broke into the house, filled the Governor's body with arrows and with bullets from his own pistols, scalped him and, stretching the scalp on a board paraded it, in a drunken orgy, all over the town.

From Taos the mob, now insane with blood and victory, swept out to Turley's Ranch and destroyed and murdered there. Turley was a wealthy American who had many times befriended both the Mexicans and the Indians. He was widely known, well liked, and extremely generous. He had many friends, and no enemies. But he was an American. He must go with the rest.

He and his handful of men put up a gallant fight, but when at last their ammunition gave out and the mob set fire to the ranch, they were helpless. A few of them, including Turley, escaped to the mountains; the others were shot down.

As Turley lay in hiding near the Trail he

heard a horseman approaching, headed for Taos. Peeping out, he discovered to his delight that it was one of his closest friends, a Mexican he had known intimately for years. He ran into the road, told him of his plight, and asked to borrow or buy the horse.

"I need him, *amigo,*" said the Mexican; "but you are my friend and I must help you. Wait here and I will send you a horse and some food by my boy."

The Mexican rode straight to Turley's Ranch, told the mob where they could find the American; and a half-hour later Turley lay in the Trail, shot through the heart and scalped.

When word of Governor Bent's murder reached Santa Fé, Colonel Price set out with all the troops he could spare from the capital. With him marched a company of volunteers, for nearly every American citizen in Santa Fé grabbed up his gun and insisted upon doing his share to save New Mexico from falling again to the Mexicans.

They had to fight their way practically the entire sixty-odd miles, for when they were not being fired upon in the adobe villages, or in forested ravines, they had deep snow and intense cold to contend with. And when finally they

reached Taos, it was only to learn that the mob had fortified itself in the Indian Pueblo of Taos about three miles away.

It required a full day of hard fighting to batter down their main stronghold, the adobe church; but at last the Indians were cowed and sued for peace. Most of the Mexicans, seeing it was a losing fight, already had slipped off to their homes.

The taking of Taos, and the public execution of those responsible for the revolt, crushed the uprising, and no further concerted attempt was made to drive out the Americans.

News of the Governor's murder had also traveled northward; and when it reached Bent's Fort, the Governor's brother, Colonel William Bent, grimly called for volunteers. His employees responded to a man. Many of them were French-Canadian *voyageurs* and *coureurs de bois;* others were rugged frontiersmen. Their object—to advance as far as they could toward Taos and kill and scalp every Indian or Mexican they found—called for nerve and hardihood and resourcefulness, and promised the zest of danger. All of this appealed vastly to the men. Also, they had known and liked Governor Bent.

Seventeen of the employees were chosen. Lucien Maxwell offered his services as guide and scout; and Lewis Garrard, a young adventurer in the Indian country, refused to be left behind. Only a few of them were mounted; the others were to get mounts when they reached the Purgatoire; but they all floundered cheerfully through the deep snow.

Beyond the fact that the Governor had been murdered, they knew nothing of the state of affairs in Santa Fé. Perhaps the Mexicans were again in control. Perhaps the American teamsters guarding an army train on the "Picket-wire" had already been captured and a Mexican army was coming north on this very road—the Santa Fé Trail—to take Bent's Fort. This possibility of danger made them only the more eager to push forward.

When they reached the Purgatoire at last they found the encampment of United States teamsters guarding their wagon-train of provisions. It was held here until it should be safe to take it through with no danger of the food falling into the hands of the enemy; for America and Mexico were now, in late January, 1847, very much at war. The teamsters, however, had had no news from Santa Fé; and the Bent's Fort

party, now all mounted, followed the tortuous Trail, climbed up over Raton Pass and descended the difficult precipices of bare gray rock on the Canadian River side.

At last they came out on the plain, where the Trail was less arduous; and after their noon camp beneath a cottonwood-tree, they took up the march in fine fettle. Maxwell, as scout, was riding ahead. Suddenly he halted, jerked his mule around, and waved an imperative signal:

"Ride à la Comanche!"

All knew what this meant. Quickly they threw themselves on the offside of their mounts, so that on the opposite side nothing could be seen but part of the leg, with which they held on to the cantle of the saddle. Racing along in this exciting position, able to sweep the ground with their free hand, their rifles ready to jerk into position, shooting to be done over the mule's back or under its neck, the thrill of battle swept them. Would the enemy be Mexicans? Or would it be Utes or Apaches?

It was none of these. A lone Indian, Haw-he, an employee of Colonel Bent, had been sighted by Maxwell; and knowing that no Indian would let so large a party approach, Maxwell ordered the men to disappear as completely as possible,

so that Haw-he would believe that only one man, followed by a herd of mules, was coming his way. He did not recognize Haw-he, but he hoped that it would be an Indian who could give them news of conditions in Santa Fé and Taos.

Haw-he was on his way for this very purpose, carrying word to Bent's Fort that all was well in New Mexico. The Americans had stormed Taos, killed many Indians and Mexicans, destroyed part of the old Indian village, and restored peace.

With this good news, Maxwell's little party dispersed. Some kept on to Taos, while others turned off to one of the many ranches owned by Bent and St. Vrain.

The final treaty with Mexico was soon followed by the discovery of gold in California. Even after the great stampede had subsided, emigrants continued their cross-country trek to this land of riches and glamour. While the majority of the emigrant-trains followed the northern route from the Missouri, many of them chose the Santa Fé Trail, at least as far as Bent's Fort. The scouts of the plains now had a lucrative business in accompanying these caravans over the dangerous stretches of the Trail. When

this grew monotonous, they bought up herds of mules and resold them, at excellent profit, to the emigrants, who somehow never failed to be in need of them.

Kit Carson took a herd of horses and mules to Fort Laramie to sell to the emigrants passing on that trail; and when he was returning alone to Taos he ran into a party of men camped forlornly on a river-bank. They were bound for New Mexico, but dared go no farther because the Apaches were on the war-path, lurking along the Santa Fé Trail for the scalps of any whites who came their way.

"I'm going through," said Kit. "You can come with me. I'll show you how to dodge 'em."

But only one fellow was brave enough to go. He and Kit set out, taking a roundabout course that swept wide of the Trail, traveling only at night when they reached the Apache country, hiding in wooded ravines by day. During the long days when they must keep under cover, one slept while the other perched in the top of a cottonwood-tree scanning the country in every direction. When Kit was on guard one morning, high in a tree, he was alarmed to see a band of Apaches racing directly toward their hiding-place. Luckily the Indians were yet a long way

off. He scrambled down the tree and shook his comrade awake, they leaped upon their horses, and escaped down a ravine before the Apaches arrived. That was their last scare. A few days later they reached Taos in safety.

It was not only the Apaches who, now that the Mexican war was over and troops were seen less frequently on the Trail, were molesting travelers. Up around Walnut Creek, Pawnee Rock, the Cimarron Crossing, all the old danger-points, tribes both north and south of the Arkansas were constantly harassing the Trail, seeking plunder as well as scalps.

It was at this time that a quail saved the scalp of a veteran frontiersman, Uncle John Smith, and his gratitude lasted for the remainder of his life.

"I don't eat no quail," he would say when offered a bit of this delicacy. "Many's the time I could 'a' killed 'em with my quirt, when all I'd had to chaw on for four days was the soles of a pair o' old moccasins. But, boys, I don't ever tech no quail."

He had been trapping for two seasons in the mountains with a few other men, and the small party was now returning with the accumulated pelts to Independence. They struck the Santa

Fé Trail without mishap, and camped early in the afternoon on Pawnee Bottom, with the Arkansas behind them and Pawnee Rock a short distance away. The mules were tired and thirsty, and here were both forage for the animals and firewood for the men.

"Keep an eye open for redskins, boys," Uncle John cautioned. "If there is goin' to be trouble, here's the place for it."

The evening passed quietly, however, with no sign of Indians. The men picketed their mules closer in, away from the voracious wolves that were howling all round them, and, with one man on guard, the others crawled into their blankets.

Uncle John's sleep was broken. The coyotes were yelling in a way that meant Indians to him. He had been too long on the plains to mistake the language. "They'll come at daylight," he muttered. And with the first streak of dawn he was up and out with the mules. But he found nothing suspicious. Instead, he saw a small herd of buffalo grazing in the tall grass some distance off. This indeed was a welcome sight, for they had had no fresh meat except occasional cottontails for about two weeks.

By the time he had led the mules to water, the light was stronger. The buffaloes could plainly

be seen now. And still no Indians. Perhaps, after all, it was his imagination that made the coyotes howl the dread word. Anyway, the men must have fresh meat.

Uncle John and two of his comrades, Boyd and Thorpe, took their rifles and set out for the herd. Boyd and Thorpe chose a young bull some distance off to the right, while Uncle John selected a fat cow grazing quietly on the left.

Crawling up on his hands and knees through the tall grass, he got within easy range. Off across the top of the grass, beyond the herd, he could see his two comrades, edging warily toward their prey. Uncle John crawled a few yards closer, raised his rifle, and took careful aim.

At that instant a quail flew up out of the grass at his feet and perched on his gun-barrel, directly in front of his sight. To fire and miss the cow at so close a range would make him the laughing-stock of his comrades. He shook the bird off impatiently, and once more drew a bead on the buffalo. But there was the pesky quail again, back on the barrel, perched in the same place! Uncle John gave it a thump with his trigger hand that sent it spinning into the grass.

Before he could raise the rifle, the two shots

of his comrades rang out. Immediately the yelling of a dozen Indians sounded, as the hidden warriors sprang up out of the grass and dashed toward Boyd and Thorpe, loosing a rain of arrows as they came. They had waited for the shots, so they could catch the men with rifles that were unloaded.

Thorpe was killed instantly; and Boyd was badly wounded, but before they could end him Uncle John had sprung to his rescue. And the Indians knew that Uncle John's rifle was still loaded. There had been only two shots. Keeping them at bay, too far off for their arrows to be effective, he and Boyd managed to escape back to the camp; and the Indians, unable to cope with so many rifles, rushed back to get Thorpe's scalp. If Uncle John had shot the buffalo, neither he nor Boyd would have had a chance, for there was no time to reload.

"And so, boys," the old frontiersman would end this story, "the quail saved my life by interferin' with my sight—an' that's the reason I don't eat no quail. I hain't superstitious, but I don't believe they was meant to be eat."

Rarely would the old pioneers of the plains and the mountains talk of their thrilling experiences to an outsider. But get a few of them to-

gether in front of the blazing logs at Bent's Fort, or beside the dying embers of their supper fire on the plains—pipes lighted—sun gone down—sky purpling to dusk. "Now, that minds me o' the time—" or, "If I don't disremember, it war nigh on twenty years ago—" or, "Wal, boys, there war a time when them redskins—"

These tales of the Trail, however incredible they may have sounded, however exaggerated some may have seemed, were accepted by the veteran frontiersmen; for they knew that not the half had been told, could be told.

CHAPTER IX

TALES OF THE TRAIL

OF ALL the famous men who rode the Santa Fé Trail, none is more renowned than that romantic hero of the pioneer West—the daring Kit Carson.

When he was scarcely a year old his parents took him from Kentucky to Missouri, settling on the frontier of civilization, and there young Christopher passed his boyhood—not too far away to see the long trains of pack-mules go swinging by, bound for a land of romance, over a trail of danger and adventure. He longed for the time when he, too, would be big enough to break away from home and follow the luring Trail to Santa Fé.

His chance came in 1826, when he was seventeen. Colonel St. Vrain headed an expedition of twenty-six wagons and forty-two men, all trappers, bound to the far-off Rocky Mountains for furs. Kit, young, small for his age, and inexperienced, was permitted to join the expedition because he was already known as an expert marksman and a boy who was afraid of nothing.

For three weeks the wagons rumbled along over the broad Trail, with no sign of an Indian. And then they came to the crossing of Walnut Creek. This was always a danger-spot, but it was one of the usual camping-places, and the caravan halted. The mules were unhitched, the evening meal of buffalo-tongues was prepared, and the men were leisurely enjoying the food, when suddenly a commotion in the rear was heard.

"Injuns!" shouted St. Vrain, leaping to his feet. But before the word was finished, six Pawnees, mounted on swift ponies, rushed out of the tall grass where they had been hiding and, yelling wildly and swinging buffalo-robes, attempted to stampede the mules.

The trappers snatched up their guns and a fusillade of shots rang out. But the Pawnees had whirled their ponies and escaped, disappearing among the sand hills.

Nothing more was seen of them; but the next evening the camping-place was at Pawnee Rock, and this was one of the worst places on the Trail. The trappers took no chances of being surprised. They formed the wagons into a corral into which the animals could be driven, and at dark posted sentinels to give the alarm at

the first sign of a Pawnee. One of these guards was young Kit Carson, tense with excitement as he stood at his post a short distance from the corral.

The tired trappers had fallen into a sound sleep, their rifles beside them, when the cry came:

"Indians!"

As the men leaped to their feet and grabbed their guns, a rifle-shot rang out, and a moment later Carson came rushing in.

"Injuns!" he cried breathlessly. "I killed one! I saw him fall!"

Anxious minutes followed. The trappers waited in the dark for the onrush of Pawnees. There was no moon, but the stars were bright and silhouettes could easily be seen. But no Pawnees appeared; and at last the men went back to their sleep, convinced that it had been a false alarm, even though Carson insisted that he had seen an Indian sneaking up through the tall grass and had killed him.

The sentinels once more took up their vigil. It was a long night to young Kit. Every wind-rustle in the grass, every distant howl of coyote-pack, every noise of night insect, seemed to his taut nerves a creeping Pawnee. But at last day-

light arrived, and the trappers all came out to see the boy's dead Indian.

There, lying in the grass, was not a painted Pawnee, but Kit's riding mule, shot through the head!

He had picketed the mule near him, and after eating its fill it had probably lain down; and when one of the guards cried "Indians!" Carson, waiting tensely for the expected Pawnees, saw a dark form rise out of the grass, and quickly pulled the trigger—with his usual deadly accuracy.

The boy was yet to have his Indian fight, however; for, scarcely an hour later, while the trappers were eating breakfast the sentinel gave the alarm. A large band of Pawnee warriors was rushing upon them. The mules were quickly driven into the corral and the trappers leaped to their positions.

The Pawnees raced by, loosing a shower of arrows and gunshot, amid their shrill and terrifying war-cry; then, beyond the deadly aim of the white men, they wheeled their ponies and back they came, with another onslaught of arrows and bullets, another swift escape beyond the white men's guns. Then again they wheeled.

All day long this kept up, all night, and all

the following day and well into the night. When at midnight the mules were in torment from both hunger and thirst, after about sixty hours without water, St. Vrain ordered the caravan to hitch up and fight its way, aided by the darkness, to the crossing of Pawnee Fork. They reached this stream without losing a man or an animal; but once in the water the thirst-crazed mules were unmanageable, and the wagons had no time to form on the other bank before the Pawnees were upon them.

There seemed but one way to escape.

"We'll charge them!" cried St. Vrain, dashing forward.

All the men who were mounted, including the enthusiastic boy Carson, followed their leader, dashing into the very midst of the Indians, firing as they advanced. The Pawnees, surprised at this great show of courage, fell back, held a hasty powwow, and turned and fled over the prairie. The caravan then had no further trouble as it followed the winding Trail along the Arkansas to Bent's Fort.

This was Kit's first experience with the Indians. In a very few years he ranked second to none as an Indian fighter and a scout who could read every sign, however slight, along the

trail. Only once, in all his experience, was he fooled by the wily Red Men.

While he was hunter for Bent's Fort, he and six others went out for a few days after buffalo. Although they had scant success, they decided to return to the fort the following day. Lying that night in their hasty camp, not far from the Trail, they were disturbed by the howling of wolves, and presently their dogs began to bark and growl.

Carson and another hunter got up to investigate. Two wolves were sneaking about, one of them so close that the hunter raised his rifle to fire, but hesitated for fear he might kill one of their valuable dogs.

"I had a sort of sneakin' idea," Carson admitted, in relating the adventure, "that those wolves might be Injuns; but when I saw one of 'em turn short around an' heard the clashin' of his teeth as he rushed at a dog, I felt easy then, and was certain they was wolves sure enough. But the red devil fooled me, after all, for he had two dried buffalo-bones in his hands under the wolfskin, an' he rattled 'em together every time he turned to make a dash at the dogs!"

The hunters, feeling secure, went back to their

buffalo-robe beds; and while they slept a band of Sioux crept up. The two "wolves" were scouts, sent to learn the size and strength of the camp, and they had signaled, with their wolf-call, back to the band. A fusillade of shots from the Indians woke the hunters. One man was killed, having five shots in his body and eight in his buffalo-robe, and the others could as easily have been killed if the Sioux had not run off immediately after their surprise attack. The hunters overtook them at daylight and killed three before the band escaped.

Kit Carson's hunting adventures along the Trail were as numerous, and often as dangerous, as those with the Indians. One evening he went out alone for a deer for the camp supper. He followed tracks for a long way before he suddenly came upon an elk feeding in a small clearing. He raised his rifle and shot it through the heart.

Instantly a roar sounded behind him. He whirled about—to see two huge grizzly bears rushing at him. His gun was empty. There was no time to reload. He turned and sprinted across the clearing, climbing a sapling just as the bears rushed up. He well knew that grizzlies can climb trees. One started up after him.

Jerking out his bowie-knife, he slashed off a switch, and with it gave a sharp cut across the bear's tender nose before it could reach his foot. With a scream of pain, the grizzly fell back, and its mate rushed at the tree, standing on its hind feet, reaching up with its powerful forepaws. A blow on its nose, and it, too, fell back, roaring with fury and pain, while the first bear rushed Kit again.

For nearly an hour the grizzlies kept up their charge, until at last their noses were so sore that they had to give up and go shambling off, and Kit then descended and very quickly reloaded his rifle.

The year that Kit Carson set out upon the Trail, at the age of seventeen, that beloved veteran of the Santa Fé Trail, Uncle John Smith, was a sixteen-year-old boy, having his first taste of Indian life and the wild West. He ran away from St. Louis and attached himself to the caravan, following the Trail as far as Bent's Fort; then he wandered off with a hunting party and spent his first winter with the Blackfeet, lounging about the tepees learning Indian wisdom from the old chiefs, or racing over the prairies with the warriors, studying their tricks with pony and weapon. At seventeen he deserted the

Blackfeet and went over to the Sioux. But it was to the Cheyennes that he finally attached himself. He married a daughter of a Cheyenne chief, and was adopted by the tribe, and soon made a chieftain, admitted to all their councils. From that day Uncle John Smith, as he was widely known along the Trail, became a power among the Indians. Even Mexican traders did not dare approach the Cheyenne village without first sending ambassadors with costly presents to Uncle John, to beg his permission to trade with his tribe.

For a while the exciting life of a young Indian chief was quite satisfying; but as Uncle John Smith met such men as Kit Carson, Jim Bridger, James Beckworth, he gradually took to trapping, trading, guiding, anything that would bring him adventure, that would add a bit of zest to life.

One year he had been trapping in the mountains with three white men, and having accumulated a pile of beaver-pelts, they decided to bring them in and dispose of them. Packing the furs on their mules, they set out, crossing mountains and prairies until at last they struck the Santa Fé Trail near Pawnee Rock, and decided to call it a day and pitch camp.

"We was traveling 'long mighty easy," Uncle John said in telling the adventure, "for we was all afoot, and had hoofed it more than six hundred mile, drivin' five good mules ahead of us. Our furs was packed on four of 'em, and the other carried our blankets, extry ammunition, fryin'-pan, coffee-pot, an' what little grub we had, for we was obliged to depend upon buffalo, antelope, an' jack-rabbits.

"We had just got into camp at Pawnee Rock. It was 'bout four o'clock in the afternoon, an' was powerful hot, I remember. We'd hobbled our mules close to the ledge, where the grass was good, so they couldn't be stampeded, as we know'd we was in the Pawnee country, an' they was the most ornery Injuns on the plains. Nothin' that was white ever came by that part of the Trail without havin' a scrimmage with the red devils.

"Well, we hadn't no more'n took our dinner, when them mules give a terrible snort, an' tried to break an' run, gettin' awful oneasy all to once. Them critters can tell when Injuns is around. In less'n five minutes we heard a sharp firin' down on the Trail.

"You ought to seen us grab our rifles sudden, an' run out from them rocks, where we was a-

campin', so comfortable-like, an' jus' goin' to light our pipes for a good smoke. It didn't take us no time to git down onto the Trail, where we seen a Mexican ox-train that we know'd must have come from Santa Fé, an' which had stopped an' was tryin' to corral. More'n sixty painted Pawnees was a-circlin' round the outfit, howlin' as only them can howl, an' pourin' a shower of arrows into the oxen. Some was shakin' their buffalo-robes, tryin' to stampede the critters, so they could kill the men easier."

Racing down the Trail, the four white men reached the little caravan just in time to see the Pawnees cut off the last wagon, which had lagged behind. At that moment an American, his wife and small boy jumped out of the wagon and tried to rush through the mounted Indians and reach their comrades. But they had no chance. The man was killed and scalped before he had taken a dozen steps; his wife was snatched up by an Indian, placed before him on his pony, and carried swiftly off among the sand hills. The seven-year-old boy, screaming and running, was almost in the grasp of another Indian, when one of Uncle John's companions threw up his gun and killed the Pawnee.

With the boy safe in a wagon, the four Ameri-

cans held quick council as to what was best to be done. They would have to do most of the fighting, they knew, for Mexican drivers could never be depended upon. While the wagons were hastily being formed into a corral, the Indians drew off to the river-bank. But only for a brief powwow.

"In a few minutes back they come, mounted on their ponies, with all their fixin's an' fresh war-paint on. Then they commenced to circle round us again, comin' a little nearer—Injun fashion—every time they rid off an' back. It warn't long before they got in easy range, when they slung themselves on the offside o' their ponies an' let fly their arrows an' balls from under their critters' necks.

"We four Americans warn't idle when them Injuns come a-chargin' up; we kept our eye skinned, an' whenever we could draw a bead, one of 'em tumbled off his pony. When they come back for their dead, we had a big advantage, wasted no shots, an' dropped four of 'em, one apiece; an' you never heard Injuns howl so. It was gettin' kind o' dark by this time, an' the varmints didn't seem anxious to fight any more, but went down to the river and scooted off into the sand hills on the other side. We waited half

an hour for 'em, but as they didn't come back, concluded we'd better light out too."

Uncle John and his friends joined their outfit to the caravan, for at Independence they would get a good price for their furs.

For more than a week they traveled without seeing an Indian, and then they reached another dangerous stretch of the Trail, at the crossing of Walnut Creek. When they camped, two of the Americans stood guard the first half of the night, and Uncle John Smith and the other trapper the second half, for they could not trust the Mexicans. Toward daylight the mules became restless, pawing, pricking up their ears, all looking intently toward the Walnut.

"Them mules smells Injuns," Uncle John said to the trapper.

And immediately six Pawnees, mounted on fine ponies and hideous in war-paint, burst out of the timber edging the creek and came racing up, yelling wildly and waving buffalo-robes to stampede the stock. The two trappers fired, and the Indians wheeled and disappeared. Almost instantly, and before the men were fully aroused, eighty Pawnees dashed out of the timber and raced by, letting fly a rain of arrows as they passed. Wheeling, they circled back. But the

"'IT WARN'T LONG BEFORE THEY GOT IN EASY RANGE'"

white men were ready for them now, and six Pawnees fell dead, the Mexicans somehow having killed two. Four times the Indians charged, losing so many warriors that they withdrew then for a powwow, disappearing into the timber along the Walnut.

Hour after hour, all day long, the Americans waited tensely, not knowing when the Indians would be back for another charge. They could hear them down on the creek-bank, howling and chanting as they buried their dead. Night came, and still the caravan dared not move, for the safety of the white men lay wholly in the protection afforded by the corralled wagons. Slowly daylight approached. This was the usual time for an Indian attack, and the Americans waited with taut nerves.

But not a Pawnee was in sight. Sometime in the night they had slipped off for reinforcements. They had lost too many of their warriors to attack the white men again.

"Hitch up *pronto!*" Uncle John shouted to the Mexicans. And in a few minutes the little caravan pulled out, reaching Independence with no further misadventure.

In the fall Uncle John Smith went back over the Trail, taking with him the little rescued boy,

Paul Dale. They found his mother, who had been carried off by the Pawnees, safe at Bent's Fort. She had made a brave escape, by keeping a cool head and never letting her courage falter. As she rode along, a captive of the Pawnees, she watched to see which was the swiftest of their ponies, and kept her eye on the sun and north star for direction. Then one night, when all were sleeping, she crept out of the wick-i-up, stealthily mounted the pony she had selected, and rode four hundred miles over mountains and prairies, back to the Trail, where she met an American caravan nearing Bent's Fort.

In those long-ago days, when the Trail was a highroad of adventure, it was an irresistible lure to every boy who could in any way join a caravan. Most of the pioneer heroes of mountains and plains set out upon the Trail when they were sixteen or seventeen, intending to adopt the rugged life of the West. But one boy, Lewis Garrard, went only as an onlooker. He had heard such stirring tales that he begged his parents to let him journey to this land of many dangers, this Trail of daring men. They hesitatingly gave their consent and outfitted him with "letters of credit, cash, a pocket Bible, and rifle, with a few calico shirts."

Reaching St. Louis from his Ohio home, he joined a caravan captained by Colonel St. Vrain, of Bent's Fort. The twenty-three covered wagons, drawn by many oxen, lumbered out of Westport on September 12, 1846, with the youthful adventurer following on horseback, hoping eagerly for an Indian fight on the way.

Slowly the wagons, in two long lines, careened over the prairie; and came at last to the valley of the Arkansas, which was Indian country. But Cow Creek was crossed, the Walnut forded, Pawnee Rock reached, Ash Creek, Pawnee Fork—all danger spots, and not an Indian was seen. This was unusual; for the Pawnees were still in war-paint; and only a week or so behind this caravan they set upon an army train, killing one teamster and wounding several, burning a wagon and capturing more than a hundred and fifty mules. For some reason they left St. Vrain's caravan unmolested.

The boy was to see his Indians, however; not Pawnees, but Cheyennes, who were out for Pawnee scalps and Pawnee horses. The caravan came suddenly upon a large encampment of these Cheyenne warriors. As the chief and St. Vrain were old acquaintances, the wagons halted, that the pipe of friendship might be smoked; and

young Garrard was permitted to join St. Vrain and the chiefs, sitting ceremoniously in a row on the ground.

"The pipe of red marble," as Garrard describes it, "four inches in length, the bowl three in height, with a stem two feet in length, was passed around containing a mixture of tobacco and the bark of the red willow or swamp dogwood. First, one chief took the pipe and after presenting its mouth to the sky, and to the ground, he drew four whiffs—blowing one toward the heavens, one to the earth, one to the east and the other to the west. Each Indian did the same. . . . The pipe was passed from right to left, then back from hand to hand, without smoking, to the first one and the same round was repeated until exhausted of its contents."

At Bent's Fort, Garrard met Uncle John Smith, ready to set out with a wagon of supplies for his Cheyenne village. Life in an Indian tepee! It seemed to the boy just what he had come West to find, and he persuaded Uncle John to take him along.

Life among the Cheyennes was full of interest to the wide-awake youngster. The very day after he arrived, Lean Chief decided to move the village a few miles away; and at once the

whole place was in commotion, the young men leaping upon their ponies, dashing off, driving up the many bands of horses and the squaws catching them.

While the warriors then lounged on their buffalo-robes and smoked, the squaws took down the lodges, tied the poles in two bundles which they fastened on a mule or horse, one on each side, with the ends dragging on the ground behind. On these ends they tied a flat basket, in which to place any of the children too young to ride a horse. They saddled mules and on each side slung large square bags of buffalo-hide, packed with the household utensils—iron kettles, stone hammers, wooden bowls, horn spoons. Even the dogs had packs, and trotted along under tantalizing loads of meat.

"After a ride of two hours we stopped," Garrard recorded in his journal, "and the chiefs, fastening their horses, collected in circles, to smoke the pipe and talk, letting the squaws unpack the animals, pitch the lodges, build fires, arrange the robes, and pull off their bracelets and finery to chop wood."

This incensed the well-bred boy from the East. He soon grew accustomed to the strange ways of the Indians, however,—except when it

came to eating dog, a dish the Indians greatly relished. Taste that he would not, much to the amusement of Uncle John Smith.

One evening when young Garrard, who was now called "Big Wolf," came in ravenously hungry from an all-day hunting trip, a delicious odor reached him as he entered the tepee.

"What's on the fire?" he cried, sniffing delightedly.

"Tarrapins!" said Uncle John, lounging on a blanket in the rear.

"Terrapins!" exclaimed the boy in surprise. "Here?"

"You know them hardshell land tarrapins?"

"Yes."

"Well, the squaws go out to the sand buttes an' bring the critters in an' cook 'em in the shell alive—them stewin' thar are cleaned first. Howsomever, they're darned good eatin'."

A few minutes later the squaw emptied the kettle into a wooden bowl placed on the ground, and around the bowl sat Smith, Garrard and a trader, their butcher-knives busily spearing out the meat and transferring it deftly to their mouths, horn spoons beside them to use for the gravy after all the meat-bits had disappeared.

Never had the boy tasted such delicious ter-

rapin. When the last morsel had been eaten and the last drop of gravy scooped up, he leaned back in great content.

"Well, tarrapin-eater," drawled Uncle John, "how do you like dogmeat?"

The two traders burst into guffaws; and the chagrined young Big Wolf knew that he had been feasting on dog!

One of the famous pioneers Garrard met on the Trail was Lucien B. Maxwell, hunter, trapper, ranchman, scout, guide, lifelong friend of Kit Carson.

Maxwell, also, had come to the Trail as a boy; and after exciting and eventful years trapping in the mountains, he came into possession of a vast estate in New Mexico, known far and wide as Maxwell's Ranch. Here he built a manor-house worthy of his wealth and high station, and lavishly entertained all who passed that way—white men and red, friends, and often strangers who journeyed down on the stagecoach to see the man whose heart was as big as the mountains that loomed beyond his house.

The Utes were at home on the ranch, and looked upon Maxwell as their White Father. He could do anything with them. Yet the narrowest escape of his life had been in a fight,

twenty years previously, with a band of this bloodthirsty tribe.

He and a dozen other men had gone to the Cimarron Crossing of the Santa Fé Trail to get a herd of horses for the United States Army in New Mexico. Setting out for Taos with a hundred head, they took the longer but easier trail, along the Arkansas, and had almost reached Bent's Fort when they came upon the tracks of a large war-party of Utes.

"Double back quick, boys!" cried Maxwell. "We'll throw 'em off our trail!"

The tracks were fresh, but there was no sign of an Indian and the men believed they had not been seen. Not one of them looked overhead, where a Ute sentinel crouched in the topmost branches of a cottonwood-tree.

They turned back, making a wide detour which took them nearly two hundred miles out of their way; and all the time they were being followed by the Utes, who kept well out of sight, waiting for their chance. At last Maxwell and his men, driving their herd, came to the low valley between the Spanish Peaks, a veritable trap, and, having seen nothing of Indians, believed themselves secure.

Lounging about their breakfast fire, they were

startled by the Ute war-cry, and in less than a minute all their herd, including their riding horses, had been stampeded, while fifty mounted braves, hideous in war-paint, were racing into their camp, shooting as they came.

One man fell dead, and another was badly wounded.

"Run to the timber!" shouted Maxwell. "We'll fight 'em as long as one of us can stand up!"

Two of them grabbed up the wounded man, and they reached some straggling trees and underbrush. Thus partly protected, they met charge after charge of the Utes. When all the white men were wounded but two, and all their ammunition had been spent, the Utes, finding they were losing too many warriors, gathered up their dead, rounded up the horses and rode off.

The men realized that they were in terrible straits. They were suffering agony from their wounds, which would soon bring on fever; they were weak from the loss of blood, sixty miles from the nearest settlement, with no horse to ride, nothing to eat and no ammunition to shoot game.

They could not remain there, however, for the Utes might return at any minute, so pluckily

they set out, the stronger ones supporting or carrying those unable to walk alone. As soon as they had gone far enough to conceal their trail, they hid in the brush all day, and with the coming of darkness trudged painfully on through the night.

By the third night many were raving with fever, and all were ready to drop with hunger and exhaustion. When at dawn they saw a company of American dragoons racing toward them, they believed it only a fantasy of their delirium. But these troops had come to rescue them. Some Pueblo hunters had heard of the fight and reported it to the commanding officer in Taos. And within a few minutes the dragoons had taken the Trail.

Another boy pioneer was James Beckworth. He was only fifteen when he made his first trip over the Santa Fé Trail and had the thrill of a fight with the Pawnees. To the eager, dark-eyed boy the Trail, and all the wide West to which it led, meant continuous excitement and adventure. He threw himself into the life, and as the years sped by became a famous mountaineer, trader, Indian fighter, and powerful head chief of the Crows.

James Hobbs was sixteen when he set out with

a caravan along the Trail, killed his first Indian at Pawnee Fork, chased a buffalo across the Arkansas at The Caches, and was himself captured by a band of Comanches and carried off a prisoner to their village. After four years in a Comanche wick-i-up, Colonel Bent ransomed him, paying the greedy Chief Old Wolf a pound of tobacco, an ounce of beads, and six yards of red flannel; and to earn his ransom price Hobbs became hunter for the fort, working with Kit Carson. This was but the beginning of a life rich in adventure. But however far the roving Hobbs might stray from the Trail, regularly he would turn up at Taos or Bent's Fort, where he and Carson would sit far into the night swapping experiences.

Almost as famous a frontiersman as Kit Carson, and equally as daring a mountaineer, as fearless an Indian fighter, as efficient a guide and scout, was "Old Jim Bridger."

This fine old Virginian was the yarn-spinner of the Trail. He had many thrilling experiences that were amazing in themselves, but in telling them, Jim Bridger could never resist exaggeration.

"Talkin' about buffalo," he said one evening, sitting about a campfire on the bank of Pawnee

Fork, "I mind the time I wintered in the valley of Great Salt Lake. It begun to snow, an' kep' on snowin' fer seventy days without nary a let-up. The snow was nigh on a hundred foot deep. It covered up thousands of buffaloes, an' the critters bein' froze in it their carcasses was kep' as fresh as in a ice-house. Come spring, all I had to do was tumble 'em into Salt Lake, an' I had pickled buffalo enough fer myself an' the whole Ute nation fer years!"

One fall Jim Bridger and his young friend Will Drannan—who had earned the name of "Boy Scalper"—set out from Bent's Fort following the Santa Fé Trail down the Arkansas, to trade with the Kiowas. It happened that the Comanches and the Sioux were at war that fall. The Comanches lived south of the Trail, the Sioux north, and their battleground was the very country through which the two traders would pass.

A few days out, Bridger and Drannan met a Comanche who was well known to both of them. They stopped for the usual handshake, and as the warrior rode off he cautioned them.

"Look out for the Sioux," he said in his own tongue. "They have killed a lot of white people this fall at Pawnee Rock."

"It's emigrants returnin' from the gold-mines," said Bridger.

Gold had that year been discovered in Colorado, the city of Denver had sprung into being overnight, and a rush of emigrants poured westward from the Missouri, following the Trail as far as Fontaine-qui-bouille. Many, having left rich farms in Missouri, disappointed at finding no gold at Pike's Peak, wisely turned homeward again. And it was upon these small and inexperienced wagon-trains that the Sioux were preying.

Only a few mornings after they left the Comanche, Bridger and Drannan sat at their daylight breakfast, when their pack-mules gave the alarm. Jumping to their feet, the men saw nine Sioux racing toward them over the plain.

"We'll charge 'em before they can stampede the critters!" cried Bridger, leaping upon his horse.

Drannan was mounted and beside him in an instant; and the astonishment of the Sioux at this charge of two lone men into nine of their best warriors gave the white men a chance to get in some deadly shooting. A fierce but brief fight ensued. When six of the braves had fallen, the remaining three turned and fled.

The Boy Scalper added six Sioux trophies to his collection; and he and Bridger, quickly forming the thirty-two pack-mules in line, set out before the warriors who had escaped could return with reinforcements. When they came upon four fresh graves beside the Trail, they knew an emigrant train had recently battled there with the Sioux. Spurring up their horses, making the pack-mules keep a lively pace, they soon reached the little caravan of eight wagons, and continued with it as far as Pawnee Rock, collecting on the way another band of emigrants returning from Pike's Peak. They had been sitting beside the Trail for three days. The Sioux had driven off their horses in the night, and they remained with their wagons, afraid to take the Trail alone on foot.

Bridger and Drannan left the emigrants at Pawnee Rock and turned off to the Kiowa village; and when they had finished their trading and had packed their mules high with buffalo-robes, they returned to the fort along the dangerous Trail feeling perfectly secure. For they now had an escort of four Kiowas; and the Kiowas and the Sioux were at peace.

Every boy pioneer on his first trip over the Trail, when he had stood guard by night, hunted

buffalo by day, had a skirmish or two with the Indians, felt by the time he reached Bent's Fort that he was an experienced plainsman and a valiant Indian fighter. But this conceit quickly vanished when he sat, wide-eyed, in a circle of veteran frontiersmen who happened to be at the fort, and listened to tales of real fighting, of Indian scalping parties and hairbreadth escapes.

These tales fired more than one boy to emulate those fearless men who were already his heroes; to become as daring an Indian fighter, as dauntless a trapper, as clever and resourceful a scout and guide; and as loyal a comrade and courageous a friend.

CHAPTER X

HOLDING UP THE OVERLAND STAGE

WHEN the first wagons were ready to appear on the Santa Fé Trail, many enthusiastic citizens hauled out their family carriages and pressed them into service, piling them high with merchandise. That was in 1824. During the next quarter-century numerous private coaches, with occupants who preferred to ride in comfort, followed behind the cumbersome and heavily laden wagons, keeping close to them in the dangerous Indian country.

Steadily the passenger traffic over the Trail grew. But it was not until after the Mexican War, when New Mexico became part of the United States, that an enterprising company inaugurated a line of passenger-and-mail stages that ran on regular schedule between Independence and Santa Fé.

In an Independence newspaper of July, 1850, this quaint description of the Overland Mail is given:

"We briefly alluded, some days since, to the

Santa Fé line of mail stages, which left this city on its first monthly journey on the 1st instant. The stages are got up in elegant style, and are each arranged to convey eight passengers. The bodies are beautifully painted, and made water-tight, with a view of using them as boats in ferrying streams. The team consists of six mules to each coach.

"The mail is guarded by eight men, armed as follows: Each man has at his side, fastened in the stage, one of Colt's revolving rifles; in a holster below, one of Colt's long revolvers, and in his belt a small Colt's revolver, besides a hunting-knife; so that these eight men are ready, in case of attack, to discharge one hundred and thirty-six shots without having to reload. This is equal to a small army, armed as in the ancient times, and from the looks of this escort, ready as they are, either for offensive or defensive warfare with the savages, we have no fears for the safety of the mails.

"The accommodating contractors have established a sort of base of refitting at Council Grove, a distance of one hundred and fifty miles from this city, and have sent out a blacksmith, and a number of men to cut and cure hay, with a quantity of animals, grain, and provisions; and

we understand they intend to make a sort of traveling station there, and to commence a farm. They also, we believe, intend to make a similar settlement at Walnut Creek next season. Two of their stages will start from here the first of every month."

At first the Overland Mail ran once a month, two or more coaches leaving each end of the route on the same day and passing somewhere on the Trail. A few years later it left once a week; then three times a week; and before the railroad ended the romantic stagecoach days, it was running daily.

Way-stations were built at intervals along the route, and here the drivers were changed, as well as the mules, each driver having a definite stretch of the Trail to cover. The trip required about two weeks—provided there were no accidents to cause delay along the way; it rarely happened that there was not some hold-up. The fare was two hundred and fifty dollars, and included meals, such as they were, taken beside a campfire on the prairie, or at one of the small way-stations. Between most of the stations the stage traveled all night as well as all day, and such sleep as the passengers were able to get was taken sitting upright among their close-

packed neighbors; for there were frequently eleven, and sometimes as many as fourteen, in the coach "arranged to carry eight."

As there was a good deal of baggage, as well as supplies for food along the way and to replenish the way-stations, the stage usually consisted of two coaches, each drawn by five or six mules. In addition to the drivers, there was a conductor who had charge of the outfit and was especially responsible for the mail and the express strong-box.

In the Indian country there were very definite danger spots, and a good conductor saw to it that the stage arrived at these places well after dark and was far beyond them by daylight. The Plains Indians rarely attacked at night, except in broad moonlight. When they were known to be on the war-path, a military escort accompanied the stage, an army-wagon of soldiers following behind the coaches, with scouts riding ahead; but if fighting came, the passengers were expected to do their share, and they never traveled unarmed.

One of the danger places was Cow Creek. Many freight caravans had been attacked there, where the Trail crossed the stream, and the stage drivers had made it a rule to pass this battle-

ground in the night. One stage, being ahead of its schedule, had loitered along all afternoon, that it might reach Cow Creek after dark. But dusk was just falling when it drove up, and stopped to let the thirsty mules drink. Scarcely had the drivers pulled out on the other side when a band of Kiowas, fierce in their war-paint, dashed down from their hiding-place behind a ridge and opened the attack. Circling the coaches on their swift ponies, yelling their blood-curdling war-cry, some waved buffalo-robes to stampede the mules, while others fired their guns at the startled passengers.

The coaches were crowded, and the excited men, all eager to take part in the fight, got in one another's way, and their volley at the racing, circling Kiowas had little effect. The drivers had dropped to their knees and were shooting as rapidly as they could; but with the stage lurching perilously behind the frightened mules, most of their shots went wild. And all the time the Kiowas were circling nearer and nearer, yelling with glee as they saw the end approaching, feeling sure of their prey.

Suddenly, out of the gathering darkness, another yell was heard. It was a company of United States cavalry. Riding up the Trail

from the opposite direction, they had heard the fighting and were racing to the rescue.

The joy of the Kiowas turned swiftly to consternation. Leaning from their ponies, they grabbed up their dead and wounded and disappeared down the ravine. The soldiers then turned and accompanied the stage until it was well beyond danger. One trooper had been killed, and two passengers badly wounded.

The most disastrous Indian hold-up of the Overland Stage occurred farther to the south, in the Canyon of the Canadian, soon after the stage-line was opened. This canyon is a deep cut in a wild part of the hills, a natural trap that frequently served as a battleground for Indian tribes long before the white men came. The Apaches, especially, would lure their enemies into its fastness and then dash from their hiding-place and cut them to pieces.

As the monthly stage lumbered along its way toward Santa Fé in January, 1849, having been nearly two weeks on the Trail, among the twelve passengers was a man named White, who had with him his wife, small child and a colored nurse.

Dawn was approaching when the stage neared the Canyon of the Canadian. It was the worst

time of the day for the driver to attempt to pass so dangerous a place; for dawn was always the favorite hour for the Indians to attack, while the white men were still heavy with sleep. But had the driver come in the darkness, the result might have been the same, for a large band of Apaches, led by the cruel White Wolf, had lain in wait all night long. When the stage was well in the canyon, they dashed out, and the terrible slaughter began.

The driver was killed instantly, and scalped almost before he fell. The passengers, startled out of their sleep, a little dazed, had no time to reach for their guns before they were dragged out, brutally murdered and scalped. Within a few moments not one man remained alive. Only Mrs. White, the child and nurse were saved, and carried off by the Apache warriors.

When the expected stage did not arrive at noon, men at the way-station supposed that some trifling accident had caused the delay. But by night they had become a little alarmed; and at daylight the next morning they set out on the Trail to investigate. In the canyon they came upon the overturned coach and the gruesome bodies of the men. Not until later did they learn that Mrs. White and her child and nurse

had been carried off. The snow was then very deep. It was impossible to get quick word of the massacre to the nearest soldiers, at Taos; but when at last a messenger was able to get through, the army lost no time in setting out on the trail of the Apaches, hoping both to punish the Indians and to rescue Mrs. White.

Major Greer went with a company of dragoons, and with him were three excellent guides who had volunteered their services—Kit Carson, Dick Wooton and Watkins Leroux. When they gathered in the canyon to seek clues as to the direction the Apaches had taken, three weeks had passed since the massacre, and fresh snow lay deep on the ground, but the keen eyes of Scout Carson discovered, by signs visible only to him, that the Indians had traveled due south.

For four hundred miles the dragoons followed a trail which now one scout, now another, would pick up. The Apaches had a clever method of throwing pursuers off their track, or at least delaying them, by dividing the band into many parties, each taking a widely different trail and all coming together again at some point many miles away, only once more to diverge.

At last one morning while the soldiers were breakfasting on the plain, Carson rode ahead to

reconnoiter. Through his glasses he saw, far off, two Indians with a herd of horses, and knew that the Apache camp was somewhere near. Keeping himself unseen, he approached until he discovered the tents in a grove of trees just beyond a rise. It was an ideal place for a surprise attack. The dragoons could approach almost to the camp without being seen; and one charge into their midst would work havoc.

Hastening back, he reported to Major Greer; and the eager dragoons were soon spurring their horses ahead for the surprise attack upon the unsuspecting Indians. But when they halted at the rise, waiting tensely for the order to charge, Major Greer suddenly decided that he would notify White Wolf of his presence and hold a parley! The soldiers were amazed; Kit Carson was disgusted.

"Surprisin' 'em is the only way you'll git 'em!" he declared. It seemed incredible to him that an army officer could be so senseless.

And while Major Greer hesitated, the Indians saw the soldiers and opened fire. Without waiting for the order from their leader, the dragoons gave their hearty troop-cry and charged furiously into the camp.

Two of these charges killed many of the

Apaches, and the remaining warriors fled, Chief White Wolf among them. In the deserted camp the soldiers came upon Mrs. White's body, still warm, with three arrows through her heart. She had probably started to run toward her rescuers and been shot down. The child and the nurse were never found; no doubt they had been dispatched as nuisances soon after the Indians set out.

By a curious course of events, this same Chief White Wolf met a brutal death in the very canyon where he had caused the massacre of so many white men. The incident goes into the history of the Trail as one of the strangest duels ever fought.

Lieutenant Bell, of the Second Dragoons, was out on a scouting trip with twenty-seven men, mounted on fine dragoon horses. In the narrow Canyon of the Canadian he came suddenly upon White Wolf with twenty-two Apache warriors, all on foot. The cunning White Wolf quickly saw that he was outmatched, and knowing there was a price on his wicked head, he asked to parley. Lieutenant Bell readily consented, keeping, however, on the alert for any trickery. The strange suggestion of a duel came from the Apache chief; and as the lieutenant was a good

sport, it was settled that they should fight it out in a gentlemanly manner.

White Wolf's twenty-two warriors, in paint and feathers, armed with bows and arrows and spears, stood drawn up in an imposing line behind their leader. Bell, wishing to take no undue advantage, dispatched five of his dragoons far to the rear, out of the combat, so that he, too, had but twenty-two men behind him. That the dragoons were mounted mattered not at all to White Wolf, for he was sure of the prowess of his warriors, mounted or afoot.

The men on both sides were commanded to withhold their fire while the two leaders had the honor of killing each other if they could. At the agreed signal Bell and the Apache chief fired simultaneously.

White Wolf's shot missed; Bell had thrown himself forward on his horse and made it rear so that its body protected him and confused the chief. But the rearing horse also spoiled Bell's aim, and his shot went wild.

The Apache warriors and the white dragoons now had their cue, and both sides opened fire at once. The dragoons charged as they fired, trying to trample down their enemy; but many of the Apaches fell on their backs and shot up-

right as the horses passed over them, inflicting wounds in horses and riders.

Three charges were made before the Apaches, those that remained, turned and fled, disappearing down a dry arroyo which had been unnoticed by the white men. The amazing duel was over.

White Wolf, shot many times, lay on the ground twitching in agony, scarcely able to stifle his moans and die like a brave chief and warrior. One of the troopers, seeing that the Apache chief still lived, grabbed up a large, jagged stone and brutally beat out his brains. Lieutenant Bell was unharmed, but four of his dragoons and sixteen Apaches lay either dead or desperately wounded.

The part of the route most dreaded by stage drivers was the long run of two hundred and forty miles between Fort Larned, Kansas, and Fort Lyon, Colorado. Fort Lyon was Bent's new fort at Big Timbers, renamed after it was taken over by the army. Nearly all of the Indian trouble came in this stretch of the Trail, and it was difficult for the stage company to find drivers and conductors who would make the trip more than once.

One veteran, however, young Billy Ryus, conducted the stage sixty-five times between these

two forts, and never once was molested. His policy was to feed the Indians instead of fighting them, and on every trip he carried extra supplies for this purpose.

One summer when the Indians were on the war-path against all whites, the authorities insisted that a military escort of thirty soldiers—as many as could be spared from the fort—accompany Billy's stage leaving Fort Larned.

Late the first afternoon on the Trail they camped on Big Coon Creek, and the scout, sent out to reconnoiter, rushed back with the alarming news that there were a thousand painted warriors hidden in a nearby ravine, waiting for an advantageous moment to fall upon them.

The soldiers wished to strike camp at once and return to the fort; and the lieutenant gave the order.

"My stage goes on!" declared Billy. "Injuns or no Injuns! Take your squaw-soldiers back to the fort! I'll go on alone!"

"If you're so brave," taunted the furious lieutenant, "why did you have us come this far?"

"Because I need you here—as a decoy. When you turn back, the Injuns'll follow you, and that'll leave us free to go ahead."

The lieutenant decided not to turn back.

Billy, knowing that in a fight his handful of men would be wiped out by a thousand warriors of the hostile confederation of Kiowas, Comanches and Arapahoes, saw that his one chance, however slight it might be, lay in feeding the Indians.

"I went to the soldiers' wagons," he says, "and got two big armfuls of bread, about sixty pounds of bacon, and a large bucket of coffee. I took them down to our camp, spread a newspaper upon the ground, laid the bacon, bread and coffee on the spread, placed a handful of matches near the bread, then went to our own mess and took several cans of coffee and bread from it, left them one of our buckets and an extra coffee-pot that I carried with me, and got a large camp-kettle from the soldiers and left it for the Indians. Then I gathered a few more buffalo-chips and placed on the fire to keep it from going out, and my plan was complete."

He had the lieutenant and his soldiers drive over the hill out of sight. Then he sent one of the two stagecoaches, with all the passengers crowded inside, to the top of the hill, to wait there, silhouetted against the sky, where the watching Indians might see and be assured their prey was not escaping them.

There remained now only Billy and the driver of the second coach.

All this time two Indian scouts, mounted on sleek ponies, had been watching intently every move that Billy made. This was something new to them! Curiosity and amazement kept them from summoning the warriors to the charge; there was plenty of time yet for that, they knew, for the little outfit was completely at their mercy: it could not possibly escape them. In the meantime they would watch to see what this strange man would do next.

What he did was to climb on top of the coach, and standing at his full height motion to the two Indians to approach. They were wary of a trap; but when they were convinced that his intentions were friendly, they cautiously and very slowly rode up.

Then suddenly they gave three terrifying war-whoops; and almost as quickly five hundred warriors had dashed out of the ravine, circled the coach and come to a halt. They were fierce-looking in their paint, and were armed with spears, which they carry only when on the war-path.

Billy was thoroughly alarmed. But he concealed his fear while, smiling and motioning to

the food spread on the ground, he told them in sign-language of the feast he had prepared for them, and of the love he had in his heart for all his red brothers.

The warriors began talking rapidly among themselves. Their hostile attitude quickly disappeared. They gave a yell that brought in the remaining warriors—who had been guarding the other coach and the soldiers—and then their old chief rode forward, leaned down from his pony and laid his bow and arrow and spear on the ground—the sign of peace—and after a brief oration, motioned to Billy to come feast with them.

But Billy thought it high time for him to be moving on. He made them understand that he was in a great hurry; and there was a friendly good-by as his coach started off up the Trail, Billy still standing on top of it, waving farewell to his thousand new friends.

It was not long before Conductor Billy was well known to all the Plains Indians; and, far from molesting him, they often rode beside his stage, protecting it for miles along the Trail. Always he had food for them. When, as frequently happened, there was not enough to go round, each Indian accepted a morsel—one bite

of bread, one sip of coffee—and was as grateful for it as if it had been a feast.

Passengers riding in the Overland Stage had to contend with other dangers on the Trail besides Indians. Some of these were caused by the elements. A hailstorm was a terrible thing. The huge stones beat down upon the mules, flailing them until they stampeded, and the lurching coach was often hurtled into an arroyo beside the Trail. If the passengers jumped out, to save their necks, they found no shelter on the treeless plain and were beaten mercilessly by the onslaught of hailstones.

Snow blizzards on the high deserts of the Upper Arkansas were even worse. The wind blew the snow in a fury of blinding sheets that frightened and dazed the animals and brought all the driver's ingenuity into play to keep them from overturning the coach as they careened this way and that to avoid the full force of wind and snow. In the mountain passes the snow was drifted high and the stage had to fight its way through, the mules straining ahead to beat down a track; the passengers, to lighten the load, floundering behind, pushing the coach on the upgrade, holding the wheels back when they came to bare icy ledges on the downgrade. Many ac-

cidents occurred. An overturned coach, a broken axle or splintered tongue which had to be replaced while the passengers stood shivering in the snow—these were expected.

The pass through the Raton Mountains was the most arduous part of the Trail. It took freight caravans five days of laborious effort to compass this stretch of only fifteen miles. The road led up impossible grades, along winding ledges that leaned perilously over abysses, down dangerously steep declivities. It was the dread of every caravan and stage that passed that way —until "Uncle Dick" Wooton set to work on his famous Toll Road.

Dick Wooton was another of the boy pioneers on the Trail. And after nearly thirty years of rugged life as hunter, trapper, scout, Indian fighter, he decided that he could make a comfortable living by building a well-graded road over Raton Pass, and opening a tollgate. He at once set men to work, and when the road was finished he built his house on one side of the Trail and his stables on the other and swung a gate between them.

In addition to the toll, collected from freight caravans, the Overland Stage, army trains, Mexicans, Indians, there was a substantial in-

come from the sale of such necessities as tobacco, hay and oats, flour, sugar, knives, matches, blankets. The tollhouse, too, became one of the way-stations for the Overland Stage, furnishing bed and meals to any one who wished to break the long journey. When gold was discovered in New Mexico, there was such a rush of traffic over the Raton Pass Toll Road that Uncle Dick reaped a fortune in heavy silver dollars—which he packed in whisky-kegs, loading the kegs in a wagon, and guarding them grimly as he drove the long way to the bank in Trinidad.

The very nature of Raton Pass, in the rugged, winding mountains, made the Toll Road a favorite place for "road-agents"; and Uncle Dick Wooton entertained more than one rough guest overnight who the next day lay in ambush and held up the Overland Mail. Especially after the mines opened in New Mexico was the Pass infested with these bandits, whose main interest in the stage was the express strong-box. They never overlooked the passengers, however, for as soon as the cowed driver tossed out the strong-box and it was broken open and rifled, the passengers were searched—and were left standing in a line by the roadside, their hands held skyward.

One morning just after sunrise two fine-look-

ing, well-dressed young men rode up to the toll-house and ordered breakfast. Each of them had four pistols in his belt and a repeating-rifle slung across his saddle. The servant prepared the meal, and as they sat quietly eating, Uncle Dick entered the room. He was startled, for one look convinced him that they were two notorious road-agents known as Chuck-a-Luck and Magpie.

The stage coming north from Taos would have an unusually large shipment of gold; the driver had told him that the strong-box would be the richest he had ever carried. Uncle Dick thought swiftly as he watched the bandits. Should he slip one of his servants off on a fast horse to warn the stage?

He was turning to leave the room with this intention, when he caught Magpie's eye. There was a cold, hard glint in it, though his lips were smiling. No word was spoken, but the look was more sinister than a threat with one of the guns. Uncle Dick remained where he was. The bandits finished their breakfast, paid their bill without question, and rode off up the mountain.

Where the Trail wound through a narrow canyon, with both hillsides heavily wooded with

pine and piñon, Chuck-a-Luck and Magpie lay concealed in the thick brush, waiting for the rumble down the Trail which would announce the coming of the Overland Stage.

The accepted time for bandit hold-ups was at dusk. As it was scarcely past noon when the stage entered the canyon, neither the driver nor the passengers had any thought of road-agents. The mules were walking, pulling the heavy stage upgrade. The driver was whistling a blithe tune.

"Throw 'em up, friend!"

The tune broke off in a gasp, and the driver's hands shot upward. Two masked men stood in the road, each of them holding two cocked revolvers. Chuck-a-Luck's were pointed at the driver; Magpie's at the passengers, whose hands had gone up even before the polite command was finished.

While one of the outlaws stood guard, the other went quickly through the passengers, then broke open the strong-box and rifled it, transferring its contents to a heavy sack. Carrying this into the brush, Magpie took up his post there, covering the stage with his repeating rifle.

"Now move on, friend!" Chuck-a-Luck said to the driver—who was only too willing to obey.

When the stage had proceeded a little way up the Trail, Chuck-a-Luck dropped his revolvers and disappeared into the brush; and the two bold and cool-headed bandits made off with their booty.

A reward of a thousand dollars was offered for their capture, dead or alive. One of their own friends, a cowardly man named Seward, greedy for the money, killed them both while they lay asleep, loaded their bodies into a wagon, drove to the nearest authorities and received the reward.

A notorious road-agent, whose cut-throat gang terrorized the Trail for a while, was a wealthy Mexican landowner named Espinosa, who had to flee to the hills when in a fit of temper he murdered an American. Thus forced into outlawry, he gathered about him the lowest renegades he could find, and his gang held up stages, freight caravans, fell upon lonely ranches, murdering and robbing without mercy.

When some Denver miners in New Mexico had been murdered by Espinosa, the State of Colorado offered a reward of a thousand dollars for his capture. The placards were posted in all the stage stations; and so one came to the notice of Uncle Dick Wooton.

"I'll get him!" declared this ex-trapper and scout, who knew almost every foot of the mountains and could read trails and tracks as well as the best of the Indians.

Leaving the tollgate in charge of his partner, Uncle Dick set out alone on his manhunt. It was nearly two weeks later, far up in the mountains, that he saw some birds circling in a way that meant food below, a camp that would soon be deserted, with crumbs of bread or bits of meat left lying around. Crawling up cautiously, he discovered Espinosa and a twelve-year-old boy busy over a fire cooking a piece of beef. Taking cool aim, Uncle Dick shot the bandit through the heart.

The frightened boy fell flat behind a log; but he was soon persuaded that Uncle Dick would not harm him, and when he crawled out they sat down and ate the beefsteak supper which the bandit had been preparing.

As Espinosa's body could not well be carried down the steep, tangled mountain, to prove to the authorities that he had really been killed, Uncle Dick cut off the bandit's head, placed it in a gunnysack, and with this gruesome load slung in front and the boy riding pillion behind, he set out to claim the reward.

Wooton's friend Maxwell, of Maxwell's Ranch, once sent fifty-two thousand dollars by the Overland Stage, giving it to Conductor Billy Ryus quietly while every one else was at breakfast. The money was packed in an old black satchel, and instead of placing this in the express strong-box Billy hid it in the boot of the coach beneath a few empty mail-sacks and a dilapidated old buffalo-robe. It was a constant worry to him during the long days and nights on the Trail, for he had a few rough-looking men for passengers.

When the stage drew up at the lonely prairie station at Willow Springs, Conductor Billy was alarmed to see twenty-five horses hitched to the rack, for he knew they could belong only to the famous Quantrell gang of robbers, who were haunting that stretch of the Trail and murdered almost as often as they robbed. They were waiting now to see what the stage might hold. Fear gripped Billy. Perhaps they had heard of Maxwell's money and knew that he carried it. Should he turn it over, and save his life; or should he risk bluffing them, knowing that if they then discovered the satchel he would be shot in cold blood for concealing it?

When the outlaws surrounded the stage as it

halted, Billy smiled down at them from the driver's seat.

"You're welcome to the strong-box, boys," he said genially, "but I can tell you now that all it's got in it is ten dollars of my own money. This is a lean trip I'm makin'."

He tossed out the box, and the bandits quickly broke it open. They found ten silver dollars wrapped in some old newspapers.

"This your money?" asked the leader.

"Yes; but you're welcome to it."

"Keep it!" said the bandit, kicking it out of his way. "We don't rob conductors. But if we find 'em holdin' out on us——" He touched his gun eloquently.

In a few moments the Quantrell gang had collected watches and a little money from the passengers, searched inside the coach for a possible hidden box or other treasure, mounted their horses, and raced off down the Trail. And the conductor then drew a long, deep breath. Not even the driver knew of the existence of the old black satchel. By Billy's cool nerve, the road-agents had been outwitted and Maxwell's money was saved.

Even after the stage was discontinued on the upper part of the Trail, when the railroad ran

as far as Las Vegas, and only the remaining miles to Santa Fé had to be covered by the Overland Mail, bandits continued their bold robbery of stage passengers and the express strong-box. The Trail between Las Vegas and Santa Fé wound through rugged, mountainous country. At one point, where the road made a sharp bend, high trees walled it in on one side, and on the other a confusion of piled boulders provided excellent concealment. This, gruesomely known as Dead Man's Bend, was a favorite bandit spot.

One midsummer day in 1879 the stage was rumbling along this stretch of the Trail, and as it turned the bend, the startled driver saw four masked faces and eight revolvers glaring at him from behind those high rocks. He threw up his hands. The passengers promptly did the same.

The bandits, their guns leveled, stepped into the Trail. In spite of his mask, the driver recognized the leader as a notorious robber known as Flapjack Bill, the Pride of the Panhandle.

"Step out!" Flapjack ordered the nine men and one old lady who were in the coach.

He put the old lady on one side of the road—out of harm's way if murder had to be done—and made the nine men and the driver sit on a partly burned log that lay on the opposite side,

in front of the trees. Turning his back on the lady, he kept the men covered, while the other three bandits went through them one by one, taking their money, watches, guns, everything of value.

The passenger at the end of the log, a restless young doctor, stood up and took a few steps.

"Set down thar!" roared Flapjack Bill.

"Is it any business of yours whether I sit or stand?" asked the doctor coolly.

"None at all," replied the Pride of the Panhandle, "only I'll jes' let daylight through you if you don't set down plumb quick!"

The doctor sat down.

When the bandits had finished with the men, even robbing the driver, which was unusual, they ordered them to sit still for twenty minutes, in peril of their lives. Then, while another of the gang covered them, and two were busy unharnessing the horses from the stagecoach, Flapjack Bill turned gallantly to the old lady and helped her to a seat in the coach, where she would be more comfortable. She had both jewelry and money, but he did not molest her.

Making off with the horses and their booty, they disappeared among the trees. Three of them, including the gallant Pride of the Pan-

handle, were captured the next day in Las Vegas.

In one stagecoach hold-up at this same Dead Man's Bend, a government detective happened to be one of the unfortunate passengers. There were but two bandits, but they had the upper hand, and the detective lost his money, his watch, and his treasured gun with its many notches. After the coach had been searched by the robbers, the passengers, all disarmed, were permitted to climb back inside and the driver was told to go ahead.

They had driven but a little way when the detective discovered a repeating-carbine the bandits had somehow overlooked.

"Drive round that bend and wait for me!" he said; and hastened back quietly through the thick trees beside the Trail. As he expected, the two bandits were sitting on the burned log, leaning over, dividing the spoils which lay on the ground in front of them. He crept up behind them.

"Throw up your hands! It's my turn now, you scoundrels!"

A few minutes later the astonished passengers saw the bandits approaching along the Trail, the detective behind them, the repeating-carbine keeping them covered.

With the opening of the last stretch of the railroad, between Las Vegas and Santa Fé, in 1880, the romantic days of the stagecoach on the Santa Fé Trail were ended—even as the Old Trail itself then came to an end as a highway for commerce. But during the thirty-odd years of the stage's existence there was scarcely a trip that was not replete with danger and adventure. When there were not road-agents there were Indians. A Colorado newspaper dated July, 1868, reads: "The coaches run tolerably regularly, but there is seldom a through mail oftener than tri-weekly. Why? Indians, of course."

In the summer of 1864 the combined Plains tribes went on the war-path, and there followed years of terrible bloodshed before they were finally subdued. During their long and relentless war with the whites—a war for which the Indians were little to blame—however many of their braves might be off in battle, always there were bands left free to lie in ambush along the Santa Fé Trail, to harass army trains, freight caravans, emigrant trains and the Overland Stage.

CHAPTER XI

INDIANS ON THE WAR-PATH

"THE only good Injun is a dead one!" More than one trader over the dangerous Santa Fé Trail had made that remark and chuckled over it. And the majority of the white men crossing the plains had exerted their best efforts, in the form of ball and powder, to make them all "good." In spite of such outstanding exceptions as Kit Carson, Dick Wooton, Billy Ryus, and a few others, the pioneers too often looked upon the Indians as some species of obnoxious animal to be stamped out as they would stamp out a nest of rattlesnakes.

The Indians were at first perplexed by this attitude; they soon became resentful; and after repeated instances of the unprovoked killing of their warriors, they grew revengeful. And so began their relentless war against the whites.

Facing deadly firearms, their method of fighting had to undergo a change. They were not long in acquiring rifles; the agents appointed by the Government, indeed, made a regular al-

lotment of firearms and ammunition to the tribes who were most troublesome, the tribes who soon discovered that they need only threaten an uprising to have the agent pacify them with a fine supply of rifles, powder and balls. While the Indians rarely became good shots with the weapon that was to them so unwieldy, they often used it in preference to arrows in meeting the rifle-fire of the white men.

In battles between tribes, however, the ancient weapons—bows and arrows, shields, spears, tomahawks—were far more effective. Their entire method, in these intertribal battles, was very different from their manner of fighting the whites.

One spring Kit Carson was returning to Bent's Fort after a successful trapping season in the mountains, when a friendly old Comanche chief told him that the Utes and the Comanches were soon to fight. There was to be one grand battle to settle for all time many trifling disputes over hunting-grounds. Carson was offered five ponies if he would fight with the Comanches.

"I can't do that," he said, "because the Utes are my friends, too. But I'd like to see an Injun battle. I'll pitch my tent up near your camp, an' look on."

It was mid-April. The battle had been planned in all its details the preceding fall in a council between the war-chiefs of the two tribes; the date had been selected, the method of attack decided upon, the battleground chosen. The Comanches were to occupy the south slope of a narrow valley, where the hill ran down to a little creek; the Utes the north slope. The creek through the middle would form the deadline; when one tribe crossed it and fought the other back to its hilltop, the battle would cease, and those driven back would never again molest the hunting-grounds of the victors.

The Comanches were already gathering, pitching their wick-i-ups on the south slope about a quarter of a mile from the creek. Many of them brought their families, others came alone. And soon the Utes began to arrive on the opposite slope, the squaws busily setting up the tents, the men lounging on the hillside recounting their many glorious victories.

Kit Carson watched with eager interest. There were several thousand warriors on each side. It promised to be a lively scrimmage.

When both camps were in readiness, three days were allowed in which to hunt, to lay in a supply of game; for when two such powerful

tribes as the Comanches and the Utes came together, it was difficult to say how long the battle might last. During these three days no pickets were placed; the warriors rode confidently off to the hunt, neither tribe molesting the other.

And then came the day for the great battle.

At dawn both camps were astir. At sunrise the war-chiefs began beating their drums, and at the first tap thousands of war-whoops resounded, as thousands of warriors sprang to their weapons, formed in battle order, and in a few moments were lined up on the banks of the little creek, the Comanches on one side, the Utes on the other.

The war-drums ceased. The Indians stood tensely silent; motionless. Only a shallow creek separated the two long lines of warriors. The war-chiefs passed slowly down in front of the lines, took their own positions, raised their tom-toms, and gave the signal.

Instantly the battle was on. Leaping Indians became flashes of red, in the sunrise light, glimpsed in a confusion of flying arrows, of twanging bowstrings, of swinging clubs or glinting knives. The hills shook with the noise. The louder the war-whoops, the more furious the fighting. Now the Comanches had crossed the

stream and there was close combat with knives and tomahawks; now the Utes were pushing them back and crossing to the Comanche side—only to be driven back. All day long the battle raged, neither side gaining.

At sunset the tomtoms sounded the signal and the fighting ceased. The warriors calmly gathered up their dead and wounded—those on their own side of the creek; any on the enemy's side forfeited their scalps—and retired to their camps for their well-earned supper and rest. There was no fear of an attack in the night; each side kept faith.

The next morning at sunrise the battle again began. At sunset many warriors had been slain, but neither tribe had been able to advance farther than the opposite creek-bank. On the third day, however, the Comanche chief led a furious charge, and the Utes fell back, the Comanches driving them up, up, until at last the hilltop was reached. The battle had been won. The fighting ceased at once, and the victorious Comanches came leaping down the hill, singing and shouting in exultation. That night, circling a pile of blazing pine-logs, the warriors held a jubilant scalp-dance, while their women, nearby, were shrieking and moaning over the dead.

The Indians were not always so methodical in their fighting. If one tribe, out for buffalo, came suddenly upon an enemy tribe hunting in the same region, the two rushed at each other without any preliminaries and a rousing battle ensued. When darkness fell, about one sad campfire, far distant, would be lamentations for the dead; while about the other, the hilarious braves would be holding their victory-dance—the scalps, fingers and ears of their enemies, suspended from pliant willow-wands, swinging wildly as the warriors leaped, chanted and howled, round and round the fire, to the music of the tomtoms.

As the bison, roaming the plains by the hundreds of thousands, were often the cause of strife between two tribes, so they became one of the reasons for the increasing hatred of the Indians for the white men. The Plains tribes depended very largely upon the buffalo for food, shelter and clothing. They never killed an animal needlessly, and, once killed, they wasted no part of it. For a half-century, now, they had been watching white men shoot buffalo merely to cut out the tongue or a small hump-steak. Thousands had been slaughtered in this manner; bison and other food animals were taking to the hills,

and the Plains Indians began to suffer from hunger.

The winter of 1863-64 was an especially severe one, and when spring came large bands of nearly famished warriors were scouring the plains for food. One of these bands came upon the Trail near Cow Creek just as a small freight caravan from Santa Fé had formed its nine wagons preparatory to pitching camp for the night.

Here would be a supply of provisions! The white men never lacked food; surely they would share with their red brothers. The Indians were entirely peaceable as they approached. All they wanted was something to eat. They came to beg, not to fight.

Halting his band on the Trail, the chief rode up to the wagon-boss and asked for food for his starving warriors.

"What! Feed all you Injuns?" exclaimed the surly wagon-boss. "We'll feed you bullets, if you hang round here!"

"Give 'em something," put in one of the drivers, who had many times crossed the plains. "It'd be safer."

"Feed them red devils? Never!"

"We got plenty," persisted the driver.

The wagon-boss glared. "I'm runnin' this outfit!"

The Indians, seeing the man's hostile attitude, dashed forward, lest their chief be in danger, and halted beside a wagon bulging with food—canned goods, coffee, flour, bacon. The sight was too much for one starving fellow. He reached forward a lean red hand. Instantly the white men were at him; and in the confusion the wagon was upset and the furious driver drew his gun and killed the nearest Indian.

With a quiet word of command, the chief rode off, followed by his warriors, one of them carrying the slain brave.

"I told him we'd feed 'em bullets!" gloated the wagon-boss; and after righting the overturned wagon he and the drivers sat down to a hearty supper.

But the hungry Indians had gone only to bury their dead. They had come harmlessly to ask for food; and one of their warriors had been slain. That called for swift and terrible retaliation. While the white men were still at supper they returned and murdered every man in the outfit except the one driver who had wanted to give them food; the chief permitted him to escape to the river and float noiselessly down the

stream—to carry word to others of what had happened. Eight of the wagons were destroyed by fire; the one with the provisions was driven off, and all the animals taken.

The wrath of the Indians, thus aroused, was fanned into an even brighter, more devastating, flame by the Chivington massacre, which occurred a few weeks later.

Major Chivington set out from Fort Larned with about sixty soldiers to teach the marauding Indians a lesson. "I'll clean 'em up!" was his boast. His scouts had reported a camp of one hundred and fifty lodges on a small creek, and Chivington managed his march so that he could surprise the sleeping Indians at daybreak. During the last night before reaching the creek, his scouts crept up to the village and brought back word that not a warrior was in camp: there were only squaws and children and a few old men. The night was very hot, and the Indians were all sleeping outside, most of them lying near the tepees.

It would not be playing the game, of course, to fall upon this defenseless camp of women and children. Yet the foolish major was unwilling to return to the fort having accomplished nothing after his boast.

"I came to clean 'em up, and I'll do it!" he declared.

In the gray of early dawn he gave the order, and his troops crept up and opened fire, killing a great many of the squaws and children as they lay asleep on the grass. Some of the old men managed to shoot a few poisoned arrows with telling effect before they, too, were killed. When the slaughter was over, the major ordered his soldiers to set fire to the lodges and destroy everything in sight—food, buffalo-robes, clothing—completely wiping out the camp.

Then, gathering up his own dead—all who had been shot with the poisoned arrows had perished miserably—Chivington set out for the fort, leaving desolation behind him and a few squaws and children racing, panic-stricken, over the prairie.

After this brutal massacre there was no appeasing the Indians. The five powerful Plains tribes—Cheyennes, Kiowas, Arapahoes, Comanches and Apaches—took relentlessly to the war-path, and were aided in their depredations by the Utes, Sioux and other nations. They found that they could do the greatest damage along the Santa Fé Trail. They haunted it constantly, swooping down upon freight caravans,

the Overland Stage, and especially emigrant trains, which, new to the country, were more helpless than the seasoned caravans of Santa Fé traders.

The army at Fort Leavenworth began accepting enlistments, mustering men into the service to fight the Indians or serve as escort over the most dangerous parts of the Trail. Two boys, one of them fourteen, the other fifteen, volunteered; but the army had to refuse them because they were too young and too small. Turning away sadly, they saw an army wagon-train being loaded with supplies for Fort Union, in New Mexico. It was difficult to find drivers to make the trip, for the Indians were more hostile than they had ever been known to be. The two fearless boys offered their services, and at once were accepted.

The train of army supplies set out from Fort Leavenworth, escorted by a company of the new volunteer soldiers, about a month after the Chivington massacre. After more than two weeks on the trail, the wagons approached Fort Larned. It was a broiling day in mid-July; the mules as well as the men were suffering from the heat. Believing themselves secure so near the fort, even though their soldier escort was nearly

a mile in the rear, the drivers corralled their wagons about three o'clock in the afternoon, and stretched out beneath them to nap in the shade. The soldiers, seeing the wagons halt, also went into camp, still far in the rear.

About five o'clock the drivers were lounging about their supper fire, when they were startled by the terrible war-cry of the Brulé Sioux. And before they could even get their weapons a band of these Indians, led by Little Turtle, had swooped upon them and killed or captured every man; a few, including the two boy drivers, were taken alive only to be horribly mutilated, then shot and scalped. The wagons were burned and their contents destroyed; sacks of flour were ripped open and poured into the pools of blood that had quickly formed about the scalped men. This fiendish work done, the Brulé Sioux made off with the mules, chanting their victory-song as they raced over the plains.

The commanding officer at Fort Larned, having learned that the Brulé Sioux were on the war-path, sent out his chief of scouts with a few soldiers to investigate. They soon discovered Little Turtle's trail and, following it, came upon the mutilated bodies and blackened ruins that told their tale only too well.

"This boy's alive!" cried one of the soldiers, leaning over fourteen-year-old Robert McGee.

"This one is, too!" cried another.

Both boys had been shot, scalped, and many times cut with knives; but life was still in them. The soldiers lifted them tenderly and carried them to the fort. One died a few hours later, but McGee recovered and lived for many years. When he had regained consciousness he told them about the massacre, all of which he had witnessed. Little Turtle had then knocked him down with a club, shot him through the back, pinned him to the ground by driving two arrows through his body, scalped him, and left him for dead. Passing warriors then hacked him with their knives, until his body was raw with wounds.

While the massacre was going on, the soldier escort waited at a safe distance to see what the outcome would be, the commander watching the Indians through his glasses. When Little Turtle's band had disappeared, he ordered his men forward to learn the fate of the drivers. For this cowardly lack of assistance to the harassed train he had been sent to protect, he was promptly dismissed from the service.

Indian depredations grew to such an extent

along the Santa Fé Trail that outfits had to combine for their protection, none being permitted to set out without at least one hundred men, and a leader who was cool-headed, courageous and resourceful.

The Cheyennes, Kiowas and Comanches especially were troublesome. The army finally had to establish fortified camps at the most dangerous points on the Trail, as a refuge for the harassed freight caravans and emigrant trains. These camps were the beginning of Fort Zarah, where the Trail crossed Walnut Creek, and of Fort Dodge at the Cimarron Crossing. In the spring of 1865 Kit Carson set out with a detachment of about five hundred cavalry to establish such a camp at Cold Spring, a particularly dangerous spot.

Leaving Fort Union, he followed the Cimarron Route of the Santa Fé Trail; and as he approached the Canadian River, one of his scouts came racing up to report a Kiowa village a few miles ahead.

"We'll attack at daybreak!" decided General Kit Carson.

A wave of excitement swept the camp as the soldiers bivouacked for the night. The Kiowas were fierce warriors; they were at home among

these sand hills; the cavalry would be at a disadvantage, for it was difficult to make a spirited charge through deep sand, difficult to wheel or maneuver the horses.

The Kiowas, also, had had their scouts out; and so they were not taken by surprise when at daybreak the cavalry made its charge. There were less than three hundred warriors, against Kit Carson's five hundred, and they could easily have escaped in the night; but they chose to fight. They fought with such fury that the battle lasted all day long. At sunset, however, the Kiowa warriors fell back, and were soon lost in the maze of darkening sand hills.

Carson then ordered the entire village destroyed. More than a hundred lodges were burned, large quantities of dried buffalo-meat and dried berries were thrown into the flames, cooking utensils were broken, buffalo-robes carried off—nothing remained. The Kiowas, men, squaws and children, were scattered among the barren sand hills without shelter and without food.

And the Kiowas' intense hatred of the white man flamed anew.

The most powerful of their chiefs was Satanta —"White Bear." Although Lone Wolf was the

head chief of the nation, it was Satanta's cunning brain that schemed the most atrocious of the crimes against the whites; it was Satanta's fluent tongue that kept alive in the hearts of his braves a fierce and relentless determination to annihilate the whites; it was Satanta's high courage and his energetic leadership that fired his warriors to action. Satanta was the most efficient, and the most treacherous, of the Kiowa chieftains.

He was not tall, but was well built and fine-looking; and he was inordinately vain, fond of display. When he went to visit the forts, he went in style. To his costume of breech-cloth and moccasins, he added the sash, coat and hat of a major-general of the United States Army, and he drove up in a dilapidated old ambulance he had somehow acquired. Two handsome mules drew the ambulance, and a trained Indian driver held the reins; for Chief Satanta must arrive with dignity, his arms folded majestically across his breast.

When white visitors came to his tent, he spread a carpet for them to sit on; and at meal-time he supplied them with a table, a board elaborately decorated with brass-headed tacks—other chiefs let them eat off the ground. To an-

nounce the meal, Satanta himself blew long and vigorously on an old French horn.

He was so fluent a speaker that he was called the "Orator of the Plains." He was able to move his hearers to rage or pity as he chose. And he made the most of this gift, his smooth tongue more than once saving his rascally neck.

Satanta lost no opportunity to visit the forts and mingle with the officers, his greedy eyes spying upon their movements, his scheming brain weighing the advantages of an attack. Even while he was loudest in his expressions of love for his white brothers, he was conducting forays against the exposed frontier settlements, he was dispatching bands of his warriors to hold up the Overland Stage at lonely points, he was himself leading attacks on emigrant trains—everywhere murdering, plundering, destroying.

One summer when Satanta and his Kiowa warriors were supposedly at peace with the whites, the Kiowas and Comanches were encamped together on the Arkansas, almost within sight of Fort Larned. Buffalo Bill, at that time, was on scout duty with the army, carrying messages between Fort Larned and Fort Lyon, then the most important military posts on the Santa Fé Trail. While the Kiowas and Comanches

were not openly on the war-path, they were becoming restless, and the army watched them with increasing anxiety.

General Hazen had been among them, trying to effect a lasting peace treaty, and had gone on, with an escort, to Fort Zarah, on Walnut Creek, Buffalo Bill acting as his scout. The escort of troops would return to Fort Larned the following morning; but Buffalo Bill was impatient to be back. He knew that it was a particularly dangerous stretch of the Trail, but danger never daunted him, and he decided to return alone that afternoon instead of wasting time waiting for the escort.

Mounted on an excellent mule, and armed with pistols and rifle, he set out. He had covered half the distance when he approached Pawnee Rock, very much on the alert. He saw no sign of an Indian. Yet in a twinkling forty warriors were in the Trail beside him.

"How! How!" they cried, extending their hands in the friendly way for a handshake. "How! How!"

Buffalo Bill was alarmed. He recognized them as Kiowas and Comanches from the camp near the fort, and they now had on war-paint. That was an ominous sign.

Entirely surrounded, he could only hide his alarm and meet their friendly greeting, pretending not to notice the war-paint.

"How!" he said, holding out his hand.

A powerful warrior grasped it and gave him a jerk that pulled him from the saddle. Instantly the Indians were upon him. They snatched his pistols from their holsters, grabbed his rifle which lay across the saddle, and then gave him a thump over the head with a war-club.

When he regained his senses they were taking him and his mule across the broad but shallow Arkansas. There he saw the entire village of Kiowas and Comanches on the move, the braves in full paint and feathers, setting out on the war-path. Apparently, he was to be their first victim.

The chiefs had halted for a powwow, and Buffalo Bill was led before them. When he recognized Satanta and Lone Wolf, whose fierce hatred of the whites he well knew, he realized that only his wits could save him. The chiefs jabbered too rapidly for him to catch their words, but by the exultant gleam in their eyes he felt that it was torture of an especially cruel nature they were planning.

"Where come from?" suddenly demanded

Satanta, who had picked up a good deal of English.

In a flash, Buffalo Bill recalled that these tribes had been without meat for many days. The army had promised them a herd of cattle for good behavior, but for some reason the cattle had not arrived. A lie might save him now. Knowing Satanta, he felt justified in telling it.

"I've come from a herd of whoa-haws."

The chiefs were immediately interested, even eager.

"Where whoa-haws?"

The scout motioned down-river.

"Back on the Trail. General Hazen sent me ahead to tell you they are comin', and are for your people."

This pleased Satanta; but he was a little wary.

"Soldiers with whoa-haws?"

"Oh, yes, a great many," said Buffalo Bill. "But I'll go back an' bring the whoa-haws to you, an' the soldiers can keep on to the fort." Then he pretended to grow indignant. "But why," he demanded, "have your warriors treated me thus, when I come to bring a message to Chief Satanta?"

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Satanta, pretending, in his turn, that it was all meant for a joke. "My

men have fun. They want to see, is whiteface warrior brave!"

Then this fine actor turned fiercely upon his warriors and ordered them to restore at once the guns and mule.

There was more quick talk among the chiefs. They must have the cattle; they knew the soldiers would not deliver them when they saw the two tribes in war-paint; if there were many soldiers, the Indians had no desire to fight.

"Will you go quick, bring whoa-haws to other side river, where we get 'em?" asked Satanta.

"Of course," said Buffalo Bill. "That's what General Hazen sent me for. I'll hurry before the soldiers come too far."

Leaping into the saddle and wheeling the mule, he hastily crossed the Arkansas, hoping he could get that far before they grew suspicious, for it would give him a good start in his dash for Fort Larned, fifteen miles away.

Beyond the river was a slight rise, and once over that, out of sight of the Indians, he put the mule at its best pace. But the suspicious Satanta had promptly sent a dozen warriors to follow him, and when they saw him escaping they wildly took up the chase.

It was a race for life then. He reached Ash

Creek and floundered through, the mule's hoofs splashing the water high. The mule was a good one, although of course no match for the Indian ponies. When Buffalo Bill came to a rise in the Trail, about four miles from the fort, he turned to look back. The warriors were less than a half mile behind. He dashed on. At the next creek they were only a quarter of a mile behind; but when he crossed the stream, to his joy he saw an army wagon.

"Injuns!" he yelled.

"How many?" cried Denver Jim, a fearless scout who sat beside the driver.

"Dozen!"

"Three of us," said Denver Jim. "We'll hide the wagon an' lay for 'em!"

In no time the team had been hidden in a thick growth of box-elder bushes, where the teamster guarded it and the spent mule, while Buffalo Bill and Denver Jim lay concealed beside the Trail.

On dashed the Indians, lashing their ponies, yelling in glee.

Denver Jim let two pass.

"Now!" he said; and the next two toppled to the ground with bullets through their hearts. The others jerked up their horses and disap-

peared among the trees and brush along the creek-bank.

"Well," said the jubilant Buffalo Bill, "instead of losin' my own scalp, I reckon I'll jes' take the scalps of these two Kiowa devils along to the fort!"

Back at Pawnee Rock Satanta and his chiefs were waiting hungrily for the arrival of the imaginary herd of whoa-haws.

This stretch of the Trail witnessed the desperate escape of two cavalry officers from a band of Comanches on the war-path.

Captain Booth, making an inspection of the forts along the Trail, set out one morning from Fort Zarah on the dangerous highroad to Fort Larned. He traveled in a small covered wagon, with Lieutenant Hallowell as his only companion, expecting quickly to overtake his large escort which, because of their slower wagons, he had foolishly sent on ahead. But more time had elapsed than he realized, and his escort was far in advance.

He had driven only a few miles from Walnut Creek when a war party of Comanches sprang into the Trail a short distance ahead. There was no mistaking their intentions. They were in full war regalia, but were not yelling lest they

frighten the mules. Wheeling the wagon quickly, Booth started racing back to the fort.

"I'll drive," cried the courageous Hallowell. The driver's position would be the exposed one. "You get inside and shoot!"

Thrusting his pistol into Booth's hand, he grabbed the reins, and started lashing the mules and yelling at the top of his voice, hoping to frighten the animals into running away.

The Indians were dashing forward on their swift ponies. As they approached the wagon they divided into two parties, one on each side, the arrows pouring in as they raced by, their bodies hidden on the off-side of their horses.

"I'm hit, Cap!" cried Hallowell, still lashing the mules furiously.

Booth had been shooting through the opening at the back of the covered wagon. He leaped forward and jerked the arrow out of his friend's head.

The Indians, now in front of them, wheeled and were racing back. Booth stayed beside the driver, shooting now to the right, now to the left, as another deluge of arrows poured in.

"I'm hit again, Cap!" said Hallowell, lashing the mules with even greater fury.

Again Booth jerked an arrow out of his com-

rade's head, and leaped to the back of the wagon as the Comanches dashed past. An Indian turned boldly and released an arrow, and it struck Booth's elbow. In the quick pain, he dropped his revolver into the road.

The mules were now racing in wild panic down the Trail, and the light wagon lurched perilously as it bounced in and out of the ruts.

On came the Indians once more. Booth, stooping in the back of the wagon, firing his comrade's gun, was struck in the shoulder by a stinging arrow.

"I'm hit again, Cap!" cried Hallowell.

Booth tore the arrow out of his own shoulder, and rushed to his friend. Hallowell was hurt badly this time; the barbed arrow had sunk deep in his back. Somehow Booth got it out, but it left an ugly wound. In spite of the pain from his injuries, however, not for an instant did the driver cease lashing and yelling at his mules, and not for an instant did they slacken their pace.

The second revolver was now empty, and it could not be reloaded. Booth tried, but the lurching wagon spilled the powder over the floor.

The Indians were coming back, their war-

whoops ringing exultantly now. They were sure of their victims. In the rain of arrows, Booth hurled the revolver and it knocked a warrior senseless.

"I'm hit again, Cap!"

The arrow was in Hallowell's right thumb, but he could not stop to have it removed, for his right hand was ceaselessly in motion, beating the terrified mules.

Booth hurled his saber at the Indians, then its scabbard, then Hallowell's saber and scabbard. There was only one thing left. It was a small satchel containing their dress uniforms. In desperation Booth hurled this as the Comanches closed in at the back of the wagon.

They halted at once. What could this weapon be? It was something new, something strange, something they had never seen before. With one accord they leaped to the ground, examined it, slashed it open with a knife, and began pulling out its contents. One grabbed a cavalry sash and wound it round his head, prancing in the road and singing in delight. Another put on the uniform coat, and began to cut capers in this grand dress. One donned a shirt and joined in the dance. All were grabbing to get some article.

These few minutes of delay enabled the officers to reach the Walnut and find safety in the fort. Their terrible condition told their tale. Almost at once the bugler sounded *Boots and saddles,* and within ten minutes the fort's commander was leading a hundred cavalrymen in hot pursuit of the Comanches. The wily Indians, however, had disappeared; they had taken their strange and fascinating new clothing and gone off into the sand hills south of the Arkansas.

The Comanches, Cheyennes and Kiowas, allied under Satanta, staged a fight of quite a different kind, on the Trail just beyond Fort Larned, in which eight hundred soldiers of the Fifth Infantry narrowly escaped a terrible death.

The soldiers were on their way to posts in New Mexico. Halting for their first rest in the day's march, they lay about in the short grass beside the Trail, when they heard a dull, deep roar, constantly growing louder. The officers' horses and the mules of the wagon-train began pawing the ground and jerking about in excitement. Just then a scout came racing back with the alarming word that an immense herd of buffalo was tearing down the Trail, in a line a half-mile wide, at least ten thousand frantic,

stampeding animals, headed directly for them.

The officers, new to the prairie, were aghast. The herd was too close to escape.

"Shoot!" cried the scout. "Everybody make big noise!"

The command was quickly given; and as the great cloud of dust approached, eight hundred rifle-shots rang out. Without halting a second, the herd divided into two sections and went thundering by on either side, joining again in the rear.

Behind the buffaloes were five hundred yelling warriors—Comanches, Cheyennes and Kiowas. They had stampeded the herd, hoping that it would kill the soldiers and enable the warriors to plunder the wagons. But seeing their plans miscarry, they quickly rode off, for there were too few of them to attack so large a command.

Already the Plains tribes had sworn to fight shoulder to shoulder in a relentless war against the whites. There was no question in their minds that sooner or later the Indians would have to give way. The onrush of civilization was moving westward with a force that all their fighting could not stay. The hunting-grounds of the Indians must go. The Plains tribes, ac-

customed to the wild, free life of the prairies, must be cooped up on reservations.

The wise men among them foresaw the inevitable end; but all were fiercely determined that the frontiersmen should pay dearly for every inch of ground they won.

CHAPTER XII

WITH CUSTER OUT FOR SATANTA

THE Indians were daily growing bolder.

Travel along the Santa Fé Trail—and the other trails used by emigrant wagons across the prairie—became so hazardous that something definite and drastic had to be done. Many lonely homes on the frontier of Kansas were being destroyed, many white men killed at their labor in the fields. In the fall of 1866 an Overland Mail station was burned, its employees murdered and the stock driven off. The allied Plains tribes threatened a combined outbreak along the entire frontier as soon as grass came in the spring.

To prevent this, General Hancock, in command of the Army of the Missouri, organized an expedition against the Indians, which he led in person, assisted by General Custer and his famous Seventh Cavalry. The purpose of the expedition was not to punish the allied tribes for past crimes, Custer says, but "rather by its imposing appearance and its early presence in the

Indian country to check or intimidate the Indians."

Early in April, 1867, General Hancock marched into Fort Larned, on the Santa Fé Trail, with his command of artillery, six companies of infantry and six of cavalry. The Government agent for the Comanches and Kiowas came with him. The agent for the Cheyennes, Arapahoes and Apaches, waiting at the fort, had already sent out runners for the head chiefs to meet General Hancock in council near Fort Larned on April tenth.

On the ninth a furious snowstorm swept the plains; the cold was so intense that guards had to pass up and down the corral all night long with whips, keeping the cavalry horses moving to prevent them from freezing to death. The council had to be postponed until the weather moderated.

In the meantime, however, the Cheyennes and the Sioux were encamped only thirty miles up Pawnee Creek, and there was no reason why the chiefs of these two tribes should not come to the fort.

But the Cheyennes and the Sioux had no desire to hold council with the whites. They wished neither to come to the army nor have

the army come to them. Not knowing just how to evade the council, they fell back on subterfuge. The first runner brought in word that the chiefs would soon arrive. The day passed, but no chiefs appeared. The next morning another runner came in. The chiefs, he said, had started, but seeing a buffalo herd, they had felt that they must go hunting instead.

"I'll wait one more day for them," stormed Hancock. "Then I'll move my troops up the creek toward their village."

That alarmed the Indians. Hoping to avoid having the army so near them, they hastily dispatched to the fort two chiefs of the Dog Soldiers—Tall Bull and Bear-that-Turns-Around.

The Dog Soldiers, a powerful and unruly band composed chiefly of Cheyennes—*chien* is French for "dog"—admitted warriors of any tribe who shared their wild, bloodthirsty spirit and were of splendid physique. They bore allegiance to no tribe, considered themselves bound by no treaties, and were at one time the most troublesome and unruly of all the Indians on the plains.

When Chiefs Tall Bull and Bear-that-Turns-Around arrived at Fort Larned with a dozen warriors, a council fire was built, and General

Hancock and his officers, including General Custer, assembled around it. Then from the tent that had been assigned to the Dog Soldiers, the two chiefs stepped forth, followed by their warriors, all advancing in single file. Silently they sat down beside the fire, filled their pipes and began to smoke, looking very solemn. This was part of the ceremony, but not an Indian could take his eyes off the gorgeous uniforms of the artillery officers. The brilliant red horse-hair plumes, the aiguillettes and other showy insignia convinced them that these gaily bedecked persons were powerful medicine-men.

Hancock made a speech, telling them why he was there. Chief Tall Bull made a speech saying that the white men need not trouble to move nearer the village, as the chiefs there had nothing to say to them. The council ended with no satisfaction; and early the next morning Hancock ordered out his entire force, artillery, infantry and cavalry, for a march of twenty-one miles up Pawnee Creek, to camp less than nine miles from the village of Cheyennes and Sioux.

All day long Indians watched them as they marched; and before they arrived at their camping-ground several chiefs and warriors rode out and met them. It was arranged that Pawnee

Killer, of the Sioux, and White Horse, of the Cheyennes, should remain at their camp overnight, and at nine the next morning the other chiefs of both tribes would come from the village and the council would be held at General Hancock's tent.

Long before daybreak Pawnee Killer and White Horse were on their ponies, racing off from the camp, saying they were going to get the other chiefs. But at nine o'clock there was no sign of an Indian. At ten o'clock Bull Bear, a powerful chief of the Cheyennes, appeared, with word that the chiefs were on their way, but it would be some time before they could arrive. By eleven o'clock Hancock's patience was exhausted and he ordered his command to prepare to march.

"I will camp within a mile of the village," he said to Bull Bear, "and they can come to me to-night for the council."

The Cheyenne accepted this and rode off, to inform the other chiefs, he said, of the new plan. But his real intention was something quite different.

Shortly after noon Hancock took up the march, continuing up Pawnee Creek. The army had gone but a few miles when it came upon an

amazing sight. The entire force of Cheyenne and Sioux warriors, in all their spectacular war regalia, was drawn up in line of battle directly across the army's line of march. General Custer gazed in admiration at the splendid showing of this battle array.

"Most of the Indians were mounted," he says. "All were bedecked in their brightest colors, their heads crowned with the brilliant war-bonnet, their lances bearing the crimson pennant, bows strung, and quivers full of barbed arrows. In addition to these weapons, which, with the hunting-knife and tomahawk, are considered as forming the armament of the warrior, each one was supplied with either a breech-loading rifle or revolver, sometimes with both.

"In the line of battle there were several hundred Indians, while further to the rear and at different distances were other organized bodies, acting apparently as reserves. Still further behind were small detachments who seemed to perform the duty of couriers, and were held in readiness to convey messages to the village.

"For a few moments appearances seemed to foreshadow anything but a peaceable issue. The infantry was in the advance, followed closely by the artillery, while my command, the cavalry,

was marching on the flank. General Hancock, who was riding with his staff at the head of the column, coming suddenly in view of the wild, fantastic battle array, which extended far to our right and left, and was not more than half a mile in our front, hastily sent orders to the infantry, artillery and cavalry to form in line of battle, evidently determined that, if war was intended, we should be prepared. The cavalry being the last to form on the right, came into line on a gallop, and without waiting to align the ranks carefully, the command was given to 'Draw saber.' The bright blades flashed from their scabbards into the morning sunlight, as the infantry brought their muskets to a carry. . . .

"Neither side seemed to comprehend the object or intention of the other; each was waiting for the other to deliver the first blow. Chiefs could be seen riding along the line, as if directing and exhorting their braves to deeds of heroism."

General Hancock rode forward with a few of his officers, and through his interpreter invited the chiefs to meet him half-way. They did so. Riding abreast came Roman Nose bearing a white flag, Bull Bear, Medicine Wolf,

White Horse and Gray Beard, of the Cheyennes; and Pawnee Killer, Bad Wound, Tall-Bear-that-Walks-under-the-Ground, Left Hand, Little Bear and Little Bull, of the Sioux.

Hands were shaken all round, and Hancock informed the chiefs that he intended no hostility to the Indians, but he proposed to move his troops near their village, and he expected all the chiefs to assemble at his headquarters at nightfall. They agreed to do this, seeming willing, even eager, not to fight so formidable a force. The strange meeting having thus ended, the Indians wheeled about and returned to their lodges; and the army continued its march and went into camp.

Darkness fell. The night advanced. And presently Bull Bear came riding up with Roman Nose, Gray Beard and Medicine Wolf.

"Our squaws and children have fled," they reported through the interpreter, "fearing that you intend to massacre them."

"Send warriors to bring them back!" snapped Hancock. "And tell the chiefs to come to the council at once!"

"Lend us two fast horses to overtake the squaws," said Bull Bear, "and the chiefs will come."

This was only to gain time. The squaws and children had indeed fled, but there was no intention of recalling them.

Hancock, exasperated at their dallying, their flimsy excuses, nevertheless let Bull Bear have two fine cavalry horses, and the four chiefs rode away.

The hours passed. Just before midnight the army spy came racing into camp with word that the entire force of Cheyenne and Sioux warriors was getting ready to move off secretly, leaving the lodges behind and campfires burning to deceive the white men. The women and children already had gone.

Hancock was dismayed. He hastily summoned General Custer, who was asleep in a far tent.

"Arouse your cavalry quietly," he said when Custer stood before him. "Surround the village as silently and quickly as possible. Be sure to prevent the Indians from escaping."

In an incredibly brief time the cavalrymen, awakened one by one from sound sleep, had their horses ready and were in the saddle, tense with excitement. The moon was full and high, but clouds scurrying across it kept the prairie in a weird, bluish half-light. Should the Indians

see the troops stealing up on them there would be desperate fighting, in which Custer's men would be greatly outnumbered by the Cheyenne and Sioux warriors. Realizing this, Hancock ordered both the artillery and infantry under arms, to be ready at a moment's notice to assist the cavalry.

Even from the camp the Indian village could be seen—tall white lodges shining among the foliage of a dense grove of cottonwoods, campfires gleaming through the leafy branches. Silently, with the moon well obscured, the cavalry approached. The cordon was quickly formed, and when the moon came out it showed a great circle of troops, all facing inward, each man sitting his horse as silent as a statue, his carbine held at *Advance.*

Not an Indian had been seen. Could they be sleeping soundly, preparing for a hard ride in the gray of dawn? Or were they hidden among the trees, tensely on the alert, waiting to lure the white men into a trap? Custer determined to ascertain. It was a hazardous thing to approach the lodges stealthily; and because of the danger, he went himself. With his interpreter and two officers, he crawled forward toward the trees. Nearing the first lodge, they halted. Not a

sound came to them. The interpreter, a Cheyenne half-breed, shouted in a loud voice that they were friends. There was no response except the barking of many dogs.

"Where dogs, there Injuns," whispered the half-breed; for Custer had begun to believe that the village was deserted. "Injuns wait now in shadow of trees to pounce on us."

It took a brave man to crawl forward. But not one of them for an instant considered turning back. They crept noiselessly, on all fours, until they could touch the first lodge. Cautiously raising the door-curtain, they peered inside. In the middle of the floor a small fire was burning, and over it a kettle of stewed dog simmered, but no Indian was there to enjoy the delicacy. Other lodges, too, were empty. Except for a little half-breed girl and a crippled old Sioux, not an Indian was in the entire village. They had escaped before the troopers arrived.

A message was dispatched to General Hancock, and the order came back for Custer and his cavalry to set out at dawn in pursuit of the chiefs who had broken faith.

The Cheyennes and Sioux hastened north to the Smoky Hill River, and there they fell upon

the scattered frontier homes and killed and plundered mercilessly.

With these two tribes north of the Santa Fé Trail, General Hancock hoped that he might make a treaty with their allies, the Kiowas and the Arapahoes, and thus prevent them from joining in the threatened uprising of all the Plains Indians. With this in view, he repaired to Fort Dodge, where the Santa Fé Trail crosses the Arkansas, and there assembled in council the principal chiefs of the Kiowas, including Kicking Bird and the notorious Satanta, and of the Arapahoes, including Little Raven and Yellow Bear.

All the chiefs were profuse in their expressions of love for their white brothers, and in promises of excellent behavior. Satanta, with his fluent and lying tongue, made so flowery and impressive a speech that the commander and his staff were moved to present him with a "peace gift." This was no less than the uniform coat, sash and hat of a major-general.

Satanta wore it in great glee, and boasted of his powers of oratory.

"Did you hear my fine speech?" he asked the interpreter a little later. "Did you hear me tell them how it makes my heart bleed to find a

switch along the Trail that some thoughtless white has torn up out of the ground; never, now, can that green branch grow into a splendid tree for my children and grandchildren. Ha! It makes my heart *glad* to find a switch, for I know there is a greenhorn ahead whose scalp I can get. An old plainsman would carry a quirt and wear spurs!"

Only a few weeks after the council Satanta wore his "peace-gift" uniform while he led an atrocious assault on the very fort where he had talked so glibly of his brotherly love.

The summer passed with the Indians ever growing bolder. The presence of the army along the Trail seemed to provoke, rather than prevent, their attacks; but it served to hold in check, perhaps, a general massacre. With the approach of cold weather, the Indians went far south for the winter and there was comparative quiet along the Santa Fé Trail. In the spring of 1868, however, their attacks on frontier settlements and overland travelers were renewed with increased violence, the Plains tribes having sworn utter annihilation of the whites.

Almost daily, as the terrible summer dragged by, word reached the army of the massacre of frontiersmen, or of disastrous fights on the Santa

Fé Trail. Within one single week the Overland Stage was attacked by the Indians at Cheyenne Wells, with a passenger killed; at Pond Creek, with the driver shot through the heart with an iron-pointed arrow; near Bent's Fort, with three men killed; at Cheyenne Wells again, with the driver killed; near Kiowa Creek, with two men killed, two hundred horses and mules and forty cattle captured.

During that same week three wagon-trains were destroyed after desperate fighting and with much loss of life. Only a week later a yelling band of paint-bedaubed Comanches attacked a wagon-train at Cimarron Crossing, and killed seventeen men, fifteen of them being burned to death, bound helplessly in one of the wagons which the Indians then fired. Fifteen horses and seventy-five oxen were carried off. A few weeks later a train was attacked almost in sight of Fort Larned, three men killed, three wounded, and fifty horses captured.

A band of Cheyennes, led by Black Kettle, swooped down upon a lonely Kansas frontier home and captured a young girl, Margaret White, while her father was at work in a distant field. Binding her upon one of their swift ponies, they carried her for three hundred miles

to their winter village far south of the Arkansas, in the valley of the Washita River. Only a few weeks later Chief Black Kettle's marauders returned and captured Mrs. Morgan, a nineteen-year-old Kansas frontier girl. They had brutally shot down her husband. They bound her upon a pony, and took her to the same village where Miss White was a captive.

The grim frontiersmen dropped their fall labor in field or barn, took up their guns, and organized a cavalry regiment, the Kansas Volunteers, which the Government accepted for a period of six months. For already General Sheridan, with headquarters at Fort Leavenworth, had determined upon a winter campaign which would completely subdue the Indians and drive them back to their reservations. Action must be taken quickly to offset General Sully's disastrous retreat south of the Arkansas.

Early in September Sully had set out from Fort Dodge to punish the Kiowas, Arapahoes and Cheyennes, and their powerful leader Satanta. Marching southward for one hundred miles, the cavalry and wagon-train finding the sand hills difficult to traverse, Sully met an Indian force on Beaver Creek and a desperate fight ensued, the Indians gradually falling back,

the cavalry keeping up a running fight till dark.

This was a ruse, planned by Satanta to draw the white men so deeply into the tangled maze of low sand hills that their cavalry horses and cumbersome wagons would be helpless. Sully fell into the trap. At dawn the next morning he continued his march down the Beaver, and ran into an immense horde of the three tribes, led by Satanta wearing his major-general uniform. A furious battle began, and waged for hours. Against the determined resistance of the Indians the cavalry could make no headway. Sully finally gave the order to retreat.

The Indians howled with glee. They followed until dark, harassing the rearguard, shouting exultantly at this turn in affairs. When night fell they withdrew to hold a victorious scalp-dance; but with dawn they were back again, two thousand strong; and for four days and nights, as the army retreated, fighting every step of the way, the yelling warriors were at their heels.

By the time the troops reached Mulberry Creek, twelve miles from Fort Dodge, Sully was aghast to find his ammunition almost exhausted. Half of the cavalrymen sat with empty carbines, dodging as best they could the furious onslaught

of the Indians, while their comrades held the warriors at bay with what little ammunition remained. The Indians hemmed them in. But in the night Sully dispatched a swift messenger to Fort Dodge, and ammunition reached him before daybreak. This so heartened the troopers that at dawn a spirited charge full in the face of the warriors sent them scampering back to their sand hills; they were too close to the fort, anyway, to feel comfortable.

Many of the Indians were killed; but not one of them lost his scalp. They saw to that by tying themselves to their ponies. When a pony was killed, the warrior cut the thong and escaped; if the warrior was killed, his body was carried off swiftly by the frightened pony.

The active operations of General Sheridan's famous winter campaign of 1868-69 fell to General Custer, who, with his gallant Seventh Cavalry, played a big rôle in tracking down the allied Plains tribes and routing them out of their snug winter villages.

In October, 1868, the Seventh Cavalry, with General Custer in command, was in camp on Bluff Creek, a small tributary of the Arkansas, when word came that a war party of Indians was but two marches away, near an old medicine

lodge. Custer at once gave the order to move his encampment to Medicine Lodge Creek; and they set out late one morning. First the cavalry, in column of fours, went swinging over the prairie; behind them rumbled an immense wagon-train, carrying tents, rations, forage and extra ammunition; and back of the train rode the rearguard, of about eighty troopers.

Since the first streak of dawn, on that October morning, fifty Indian warriors had been hidden in a timbered ravine watching every movement in camp. They waited until the rearguard got well out on the prairie, separated from the main body by the long train of wagons, and then they dashed out, on their fine war ponies, and began a furious attack upon the men in the rear. They wished to get at the wagons and plunder them, and to do this they must first draw off the rearguard, who would fall into the hands of two hundred warriors still hidden in the ravine.

Custer, riding at the head of the column, raced back to see whether reinforcements were needed in the rear. At the same time he gave order for the troops and the train to continue, for he believed it to be only a slight skirmish in which the rearguard could nobly take care of itself.

He found his men in a perfect hail of arrows

and bullets. The Indians, fighting from the off-side of their well-trained ponies, would rush up, fire, wheel, and in an instant be back again. "Surely no race of men, not even the famous Cossacks, could display more wonderful skill in feats of horsemanship," marveled Custer.

When the two hundred hidden warriors rushed out of the ravine to the aid of their comrades, a a second troop of cavalry was called back and ordered to fight on foot. Many of the troopers were recruits, unused to horses, and their aim was more sure from the stationary ground.

For a while the battle raged furiously. In the midst of it one bold Indian dashed forward; his pony was shot and he was catapulted almost at the feet of the astonished cavalrymen. Before they could recover from their surprise, a second Indian had raced up, the fallen warrior leaped upon the pony behind his comrade, and the faithful steed went flying over the prairie with its double burden, carrying the two warriors to safety before the troopers quite realized what had occurred. This display of individual bravery, and of real comradeship in risking danger to assist a friend in need, moved Custer to admiration, and he was not sorry that they escaped.

The Indians finally fell back, and the command proceeded to Medicine Lodge Creek; but as scouts sent out from that point could find no fresh trail of a war party, they moved back to Bluff Creek; and a few days later were in camp on the Santa Fé Trail ten miles below Fort Dodge. There, late in October, they began feverish preparations for the great winter campaign against the confederation of Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas, Comanches, and a band of Apaches, who were known to be in winter camp in a long valley in the Washita Mountains. To reach them more readily, the army established a base, known as Camp Supply, about a hundred miles south of Fort Dodge, near Sully's battleground on Beaver Creek.

General Custer, with his cavalry, and a mile-long wagon-train in command of Colonel Inman, made the dreary march over the sand desert; and General Sheridan took up his headquarters in the new camp to direct the campaign.

They were scarcely settled when a dispatch-bearer arrived with a message from the War Department. It was an order for Custer to get out immediately and hunt the Indians, rout them out of their winter homes, inflict upon them such punishment as he could. At dawn the next morn-

ing, November twenty-third, a furious snow blizzard was raging; but General Custer had his orders, and in the teeth of the gale he and his command of eight hundred cavalrymen swung out of Camp Supply and beat their way forward through the blinding storm, making only fifteen miles in their day of hard riding.

On the twenty-sixth they reached the banks of the Canadian, where scouts brought in the exciting report that a fresh trail had been discovered of a war party headed southeast. Leaving the wagons under guard on the Canadian, Custer and his eager troops took up the trail. He had with a him a number of Osage scouts, headed by two chiefs, Little Beaver and Hard Rope; as well as several white scouts, including a picturesque old mountain man known as California Joe.

As the cavalry set out to follow this fresh trail, two of the Osages went on foot ahead. Then in single file rode Custer and a half-dozen more scouts—to act as messengers, for there could be no bugle signals; even talking aloud was forbidden. Behind them came the troops silent and alert.

Several hours passed. And then suddenly the two Osage scouts held up their hands in warn-

ing. Custer signaled his troops to halt, and spurred forward.

"What is it?" he asked in a whisper.

"Me smell fire!" whispered one of the scouts.

The other Osage was on his knees, his ear close to the ground.

"Me smell, but no hear." he said. "Fire grow cold."

Again they took up the march, moving more cautiously now, along the well-marked trail, and they proceeded for fully a half-mile before they came upon the dying embers of a fire. The Indian sense of smell and hearing, developed so marvelously, could detect a fire even at that great distance and know that it was not burning brightly.

Some time after nightfall, with a round moon in the sky, flooding the valley with light, Custer and the scouts stood on a rise, and saw before them a long stretch of timber running back from a silver-dark stream that was the Washita. Glimmering ghostly through the trees were the tall white lodges of an immense Cheyenne village.

They fell back quickly, before the barking dogs should betray their presence, and Custer summoned his officers and told them his plan.

The command was to be divided into four sections, to surround the camp; they were to find their positions at once, while the moon was still bright; and at dawn the attack would be simultaneous on all sides, Custer leading the charge in front.

Excitement ran high as word was passed quietly along, from one to another. That they would face a large force of warriors, they knew from the size of the village. Their advantage lay in surprising them in the heavy sleep that grips one at the dawn hour.

The men found their positions, and the moon went down. Pitch-darkness followed, and they waited tensely. How many would come out of the fight? That was the thought of each, even though all were eager for the battle. Slowly the blackness melted into dull gray.

In the section holding the rear a nervous trooper, his finger ready on the trigger of his rifle, squeezed it unconsciously. The rifle-shot, ringing through the dampness of dawn, gave the startling alarm. But General Custer was quick with the signal to charge, and before the Indians were fully aroused, a deadly fire poured in upon them from all sides.

Snatching up their weapons, the warriors

"CUSTER WAS QUICK WITH THE SIGNAL TO CHARGE"

fought furiously, from behind trees, from below the river-bank, from back of their lodges. A few took to flight, and Major Elliot and nineteen men set off after them—and never returned; led into ambush, they were killed and scalped.

In the widespread village on the bank of the Washita a fierce battle raged. The trees hampered the cavalry horses, even as they aided the Indians. Led by Black Kettle, the warriors fought with all the ferocity and the daring for which the Cheyennes were noted. But surprised as they had been, they found themselves no match for the Seventh Cavalry and its courageous commander; and by noon all resistance had ended. Many on both sides lay dead or severely wounded.

When Custer had seen to the assembling of his prisoners—all squaws and children—and the rounding up of several hundred Indian ponies, he came to the emergency hospital, where the surgeon was at work beneath a wide-branched tree. On a bundle of buffalo-robes sat a small bugler boy, patiently waiting his turn. His face was covered with blood. An Indian had shot him in the head with an iron-pointed arrow, which had entered his forehead and only partly emerged behind his ear.

Custer was attracted by the courageous way in which he bore his suffering.

"You are a brave boy," he commended. "Did you see the Indian who wounded you?"

The bugler shoved his hand deep down into his trousers pocket and brought up a gory scalp.

"If anybody thinks I didn't see him, I want them to take a look at that!" he said.

With the arrow in his head, the pain excruciating, the blood almost blinding him, the plucky lad had killed the Indian with his revolver, and calmly scalped him.

There were sixty squaws and children. Some of the captured ponies were reserved to carry these prisoners; the entire remainder of the herd, nearly eight hundred splendid animals, were shot. General Custer brutally gave the order, and excused himself by saying it was the only thing he could do. The two companies detailed to accomplish the slaughter could scarcely execute his command; they were cavalrymen; shooting eight hundred horses in cold blood seemed to them an odious, an outrageous thing.

Scarcely had the last terrible scream of the ponies died, when a force of a thousand warriors was sighted far off across the plain racing toward them. Custer quickly formed his men.

This Cheyenne village under Chief Black Kettle was but the first of a number of Indian villages stretching up the Washita valley. Immediately above were the Arapahoes, under Little Raven; then the Kiowas, under Satanta and Lone Wolf; another village of Cheyennes; then Comanches; then Apaches. It was the warriors from some of these allied tribes who were now advancing.

When they approached closely enough to see Black Kettle's village completely destroyed and, worse still, hundreds of his ponies killed, they turned and fled, lest the same terrible fate overtake them.

The Battle of the Washita was thus a glorious victory for General Custer and for his splendid Seventh Cavalry, which, although only two years old, was already showing its mettle.

A few days later Custer and his troops were back at Camp Supply; but in less than a week he was ordered out once more, to track down the Indians and completely break their power. The Kansas Volunteers had now joined him, eager to find the two captured women, Miss White and Mrs. Morgan, who were believed to be in one of the Indian villages on the Washita.

Custer set out in early December, with a large

force of cavalry, a detachment of scouts, and thirty Osage and Kaw Indians as guides and trailers. An immense wagon-train, under Colonel Inman, lumbered along behind them, careening perilously over the sand hills. Reaching the Washita, they passed from village to village; and found them all deserted. They discovered no trace of the two white women; but in the village which Satanta had occupied they came upon the recently murdered bodies of Mrs. Blinn and her little daughter, who had been captured two months previously when the Kiowas, led by Satanta, destroyed a wagon-train on the Santa Fé Trail at Sand Creek.

The counts against this black-hearted chief of the Kiowas were piling up. Custer was determinded to track him down ruthlessly, and bring him to account for his increasingly atrocious crimes.

The trail of the Kiowas under Satanta and Lone Wolf was plainly marked, and the army lost no time in following it. After a week of extremely difficult traveling through sand and chaparral, they met these two chiefs waving a flag of truce! Satanta's moving oratory again won him a respite. But eventually he was taken, and sent to the Texas penitentiary with his com-

rade-in-crime, Big Tree. The sentence was for life, but a pardon was soon on its way for both of them. Only a few hours before it arrived, Satanta attempted to escape and, in the jump from a window, broke his neck. Thus ended the career of one of the most sagacious, if one of the most villainous, of all the famous chiefs in America's frontier history.

Custer rescued the two women, Miss White and Mrs. Morgan, as soon as word reached him that they were in a Kiowa village on a branch of the Washita. He surprised the village and, surrounding it, captured three chiefs, threatening to kill them if the women were not delivered to him at once. They were not in that village, but the chiefs hastened to send for them, for they knew General Custer, and they knew the might of Custer's cavalry.

Sheridan's campaign, in which Custer took so active a part, broke the resistance of the Plains tribes. While for long afterward occasional depredations were committed by isolated bands, the majority of the Indians gave up the pathetic struggle to preserve their freedom, their centuries-old hunting-grounds, their wild, nomadic unhampered life, and went peacefully, if complainingly, back to their reservations. Their

grievances were summed up in one of Satanta's moving speeches:

"The white men slaughter the buffalo by the thousands merely for amusement; we kill them only when necessity compels us. The white men are careless with campfires and burn the prairie grasses; we save the grass, that our horses may have food. The white men cut down the few trees that edge our streams, to build huge fires; we cook our food over a tiny fire made of dry limbs and branches and so preserve the trees for future years. Wherever the white men come—the Indian must go. No food, no forage, no fuel."

CHAPTER XIII

BUFFALO BILL AND THE BUFFALOES

WHEN William Frederick Cody was a very small child, still in pinafores, his father emigrated from Iowa to the Kansas prairie and settled beyond Fort Leavenworth. That made all the difference to young Bill. It was wild, frontier country, with homesteads far-scattered; and his boyhood was much the same as that of Kit Carson, thirty-five years earlier. He learned to ride the wildest of horses, to hit a swiftly moving target while racing bareback, to know the habits of Indians and to read the signs of the trail.

When he was scarcely fifteen he was a rider for the Pony Express, one of the most hazardous occupations on the plains. He served in the army until the close of the Civil War; and then, in 1867, when he was barely twenty-one, he was offered five hundred dollars a month to keep the construction gang of the Kansas Pacific Railroad supplied with fresh meat. The construction gang consisted of twelve hundred men

with voracious outdoor appetites; but young Bill already had the reputation of being the greatest buffalo hunter on the plains, and he considered it a simple matter for him to contract to supply an average of twelve buffaloes a day. It was while he was hunter for the Kansas Pacific that he gained his title of "Buffalo Bill."

One day he harnessed his buffalo horse, Brigham, to a wagon, to see whether he would do for a work horse in an emergency. The sensitive, highly trained Brigham objected strenuously, and young Cody was unharnessing him when some one sighted a small herd of buffaloes crossing a distant hill. No bison had been seen for days, and the camp would soon be short of meat.

"Hitch up the wagon and follow me!" cried Cody to one of his helpers. And leaping upon the horse bareback, with only a blind bridle, he dashed off after the herd. His saddle was back in camp; there was no time to go for it. But he had a breech-loading needle-gun—his "buffalo killer Lucretia Borgia." With this and Brigham he asked for nothing more.

He overtook five army officers, all new to the prairie country, who had seen the herd from Fort Harker and raced out for some sport.

They regarded with much amusement this unkempt boy, riding bareback on what appeared to be a work horse, his long hair streaming in the wind. They believed him to be one of the new track-layers in the construction gang, one perhaps who had never even seen a buffalo before.

The captain laughed aloud.

"Do you expect to catch those buffaloes on that Gothic steed?" he asked, winking at one of the lieutenants.

Young Bill knew very well what they thought.

"I hope so," he replied, "by pushing on the reins hard enough."

"You'll never catch them in the world, my fine fellow," said the captain. "It requires a fast horse to overtake the animals on the prairie."

"Does it?" asked Bill innocently.

"Yes; but come along with us, as we are going to kill them more for pleasure than anything else. All we want are the tongues and a piece of tenderloin. You may have all that is left."

"I am much obliged to you, captain, and will follow you," the lad said in a meek tone.

There were eleven buffaloes in the herd, and

they were about a mile ahead. With his vast knowledge of the animals, Bill Cody knew that, unconscious of pursuit, they were making for a creek to get water; and even when pursued they rarely deviate from their original course. So, while the officers dashed on after them, he quietly turned Brigham aside and struck off for the creek, to be there when the officers unwittingly drove them up. He had scarcely reached his post when the buffaloes came thundering past, not a hundred yards away, with the officers three hundred yards in the year.

Jerking the blind bridle off Brigham, the intelligent buffalo horse knew that was the signal, and he dashed off at the top of his speed, getting in ahead of the officers and rushing abreast of the rear animal.

Bang! went Lucretia Borgia. The buffalo dropped dead, and Brigham raced on to the next one, slackening his pace as he came abreast, so his master could fire.

With twelve shots the eleven buffaloes lay dead, and then Brigham stopped. The amazed officers had not had a chance to fire a single shot. They rode up as young Bill leaped to the ground, considerably pleased with himself, as he had a right to be, for he had neither bridle, reins nor

saddle—only his needle-gun and the faithful Brigham.

He made a bow to the officers.

"Allow me, gentlemen," said he, "to present to you all the tongues and tenderloins you wish from these buffaloes."

The captain and the four lieutenants were dumfounded. But at last the captain got out, "Well, I never saw the like before! Who under the sun are you, anyhow?"

"My name is Bill Cody," replied the young hunter.

"Bill, eh? Well, Buffalo Bill is what we'll call you," said the captain. And the name never left him.

It was soon contested, however; for Billy Comstock, a widely known scout and hunter, had already been dubbed "Buffalo Bill," and his friends resented having another one on the plains. The disputes became so heated that only a contest could settle the buffalo-killer championship. This was arranged, with a day set aside for the "battle"—a gala day, with picnicking holiday crowds, and excursion trains run even from St. Louis. Referees were to follow each of the two contestants and keep tally.

Three different herds conveniently appeared,

in between refreshments. When the third herd was sighted, Cody did a bit of grandstand play by dispensing with his saddle and riding Brigham bareback. His total score for the day was two hundred and fifteen buffaloes killed, to Comstock's ninety-four. After that, no further challenges appeared for the title of "Buffalo Bill."

During the eighteen months he was supplying meat to the Kansas Pacific workmen, this renowned hunter killed four thousand two hundred and eighty buffaloes, in addition to elk and other game. In 1868 he went back to scouting for the army; and fifteen years later organized his famous Wild West Show.

It was while he was with the army, in 1872, that the Russian Grand Duke Alexis came for a visit to America. Having been feasted and fêted in the East, the Grand Duke wished to see some of the wild life of the West; and it fell to the lot of General Sheridan to entertain him. Sheridan chose as his aides General Custer and, of course, that famous hunter of the bison, Buffalo Bill.

A buffalo hunt was arranged. Early one morning the party set out—the Grand Duke and his suite, Custer, Buffalo Bill, a company of

cavalry and some friendly Indians. The Grand Duke was all excitement, and eagerly questioned the famous hunter. Should he shoot high or low? At what distance? How should he maneuver his horse?

Buffalo Bill gave him his own celebrated horse, Buckskin Joe.

"All you have to do is sit on his back and shoot," he instructed, "as soon as we get into the herd. He's trained to hunt buffalo; he'll maneuver himself."

It was, of course, silently agreed among all the hunters that the Grand Duke should have the first chance and the very best shot at the buffaloes.

A herd was sighted. The hunters approached unseen behind a small ridge in the plain; and then, with a sudden dash, they were in the midst of the animals. Alexis, his pistol ready, fired six shots at a distance of twenty feet; but not one shot even grazed a buffalo. Buffalo Bill raced up to the Grand Duke's side and exchanged pistols with him; and again Alexis fired six times without effect.

The stampeding herd was fast escaping. The situation was a delicate one. To allow the distinguished visitor to fail at such close range,

with such big targets, was unthinkable. He must somehow be enabled to kill a buffalo.

Buffalo Bill again rushed up to him, grabbed the empty pistol and thrust into the astonished Grand Duke's hands the famous needle-gun Lucretia Borgia.

"Fire when I tell you to!" he cried; and at the same time he gave Buckskin Joe a mighty whack with his quirt.

In a few mad leaps the trained horse was abreast of a big buffalo bull and not ten feet from it.

"Now is your time!" cried Buffalo Bill.

The Grand Duke fired. And down came the bull!

In his delight, Alexis reined in his horse, dropped the gun to the ground, and gleefully waved his hat aloft. His suite came galloping up with congratulations, and presently General Sheridan arrived with refreshments, and a rousing toast was drunk to the Grand Duke who killed a buffalo.

From the earliest days of the Santa Fé trade caravans had difficulty in passing through the immense herds that crossed the Trail. Often the wagons were held up for hours until the solid mass, tens of thousands of animals, had come to

an end. When the herd in migration lingered to feed in the meadows by the river, it was possible to drive through them for thirty miles or more. The buffaloes would move aside; watch curiously; and, if nothing occurred to frighten them, go quietly back to grazing; continually opening a path in front and closing in the rear.

In the early fall of 1824, the year that wagons appeared on the Old Santa Fé Trail, an enthusiastic boy, James Ohio Pattie, accompanied his father's caravan. No solid mass of buffaloes was encountered, as the animals traveled *en masse* only in the spring migration; but innumerable small herds were seen; and it was all new and exciting to young James. With the hunters of the party, he dashed out after the game.

"I killed two fat buffalo cows," was his record for one day. "One of them had a calf which I thought I would try to catch alive. In order to do so, I concluded it would be well to be free from any encumbrances, and accordingly laid aside my shot-pouch, gun and pistols. I expected it to run, but instead of that, when I came within six or eight feet of it, it turned around and ran upon me, butting me like a ram, until I was knocked flat upon my back. Every time I attempted to rise, it laid me down again. At last

I caught it by one of its legs and stabbed it with my butcher-knife or I believe it would have butted me to death. I made up my mind that I would never attempt to catch another buffalo calf alive, and also that I would not tell my companions what a capsizing I had had."

The veteran Santa Fé trader, Josiah Gregg, was once piloting a caravan from Santa Fé to the Missouri. Wishing to find an easier route than that along the Cimarron, he struck off from the Old Trail and wound through the sand hills to the east. One day he was riding about a mile ahead of the wagons, scouting for the best route, when he saw some dark objects looming dimly through the tall grass in a glade not far away. He was alarmed, for he believed them to be the tops of Indian lodges; but he soon discovered that they were the huge humps of a herd of buffalo quietly grazing.

Dismounting and creeping up to them through the tall grass, he raised his nine-chambered rifle and fired at one that stood broadside to him. For some reason, he missed. As the shot rang out, the buffaloes raised their heads and looked about, but seeing nothing suspicious, they went on grazing again. Perhaps they took the shot to be a sudden clap of thunder.

Gregg aimed more carefully and fired again at the same animal; then, believing that he had mortally wounded it, he fired in quick succession at four others.

His men came rushing up to him in alarm, their guns held ready. They thought he was being attacked by Indians. When they saw it was only buffaloes, they were much relieved, although they wondered how a veteran like Gregg could have killed only one animal with six shots. A few days later one of the men rode off from the caravan, and returned with seven buffalo-tongues —just to show his companions that he could shoot buffaloes.

An Irishman trapping with Kit Carson went out one day to prove the same thing. He came back much faster than he set out. Young O'Neil was new to the prairies, but he was such jolly company that Kit Carson and a few other veterans of the frontier permitted him to go on a trapping expedition with them. Camped early one evening near the Santa Fé Trail, the Irish lad listened to the old-timers spinning tall yarns of buffalo hunts, until he could contain himself no longer.

"Begorras," said he, "'tis meself could kill the bastes!"

"There's a herd now!" exclaimed one of the men, pointing to some dark objects silhouetted against the sunset. "Go after it, Pat!"

Kit Carson objected.

"We need meat!" he said.

"And it's mate I'll be bringing ye!" snorted O'Neil, grabbing up his rifle and striding across the prairie.

Carson was ready to follow, but one of the trappers held him back.

"The boy's first buffalo hunt," he said. "Let's see what happens!"

Presently they heard a rifle-shot. A few minutes later they were startled by wild yelling as O'Neil, hatless, without his gun, came dashing into camp, a furious buffalo bull close upon his heels.

"Here we are, b'jabbers! Stop us! Stop us!" shouted O'Neil.

As he rushed into the nearest tent, the bull only a few feet behind him, Kit Carson's rifle brought down the buffalo. Only when O'Neil was sure the creature was dead would he crawl out.

The trappers were laughing loudly. But the young Irishman was not to be abashed.

"Faith, an' ye asked me to bring in mate,

didn't ye?" he said. "There was niver a bargain whether it should be dead or alive!"

A year or two later Kit Carson discovered from his own unpleasant experience that a buffalo bull wounded just enough to be maddened could be as dangerous as an infuriated grizzly. While he was hunter for Frémont, he left the Trail one day and went off after buffalo. He had killed a fine young cow and was cutting it up, taking the tongue and a few juicy steaks, when a lone bull came plunging by him, rushing off across the prairie. Kit leaped upon his horse and gave chase. But as he reached the buffalo and, taking quick aim, pulled the trigger, his horse fell, one foot in a prairie-dog hole, and Kit was catapulted almost on top of the astonished buffalo. His shot, with the horse falling, had gone wild, inflicting a shoulder wound instead of reaching the heart.

The enraged bull charged, and Kit, in danger of quick and terrible death, took to his heels, racing across the prairie to the nearby river, with the maddened buffalo bellowing behind him, gaining at every step. He reached the river and plunged into the deep water, for this was his only hope. The buffalo halted on the bank, threatening him every time he attempted

to land, keeping Kit a prisoner, swimming round and round in the water, until another hunter raced up and killed the animal. Kit then crawled out, dripping and cold, and added its tongue to his pile of camp meat.

His prowess as a buffalo hunter reached its height at the time he killed five in a single race, using only four bullets. When his fourth bullet was spent he quickly dismounted and cut it out of the buffalo's heart, to use it almost immediately in bringing down his fifth victim.

Among the Indians, however, Kit Carson's prowess became supernatural when he *treed* a buffalo. In a hunt with them he was chasing the animal down a very steep hillside, which was bare except for a few low, wide-branched cedars. The buffalo, running pellmell, hearing the horse-hoofs behind it, saw one of these cedars directly in its path and, with no time to detour, took a flying leap. Kit's bullet reached its heart while it was in midair, and it fell into the cedar, lodging in the topmost branches. The Indians were amazed and awed to see a buffalo in a tree. They believed that Carson had used some form of magic to accomplish this unheard-of thing, and begged him to leave the animal there for "Big Medicine."

When the Indians went after buffalo, the hunt was a well-organized affair. The entire village moved to the vicinity of the feeding-grounds; the warriors, on their buffalo ponies—which were kept for this purpose only, differing in training from their war ponies—had all the enjoyment of the chase; but once the animals were killed their duty ceased. The squaws followed their masters to skin the buffaloes, cut them up, carry the meat and hides back to camp, and do everything else in the way of labor.

Occasionally, however, when a tribe was on the move and wished to halt for one day's hunt, the squaws were left behind, as encumbrances, the hunt taking on the nature of sport as well as necessity. Texas Jack, who spent much time with the Indians, describes a Pawnee hunt that occurred a little north of the Santa Fé Trail.

The tribe was on the move. As the squaws set up the lodges one evening, and hustled about preparing food for their lords, the head chief gave the order for a buffalo hunt on the morrow. Suppressed excitement swept the warriors. They leaped up from their lounging position on the grass to go inspect their buffalo ponies, to examine their bows, to see that they had arrows that were strong and straight and true.

Long before daylight the next morning the entire village was astir, the hunters preparing to be off, leaving the squaws and children behind. The Pawnee went to the hunt as scantily equipped as possible. He wore only breech-cloth and moccasins, and carried a light bow and a few arrows in his hand. His pony had no saddle, no blanket, not even a bridle: only a small mouth-rope.

Dawn came; and at a signal from the chief, the hunters set off afoot, leading their ponies, loping along tirelessly for ten or twelve miles, reserving the energy of their mounts for the spectacular dash into the herd.

A few scouts rode ahead. When at last they came racing back to report a herd in sight, a halt was called, the council pipe was passed around, and final details were settled. There was to be a front line of two hundred warriors, sufficiently far apart to permit a second line of a hundred and fifty to shoot between them if necessary; while a third line, of about one hundred, formed a reserve.

As the council ended, the hunters leaped upon their frantic ponies, the animals now as excited, as eager to be in the chase, as their riders. Each man tried to edge into front place. But an im-

perious order from the chief held them back to the position he designated.

In formation now, the head chief riding in front, all tense with excitement, they approached the knoll that hid them from the herd. The chief advanced cautiously. The hunters watched him in breathless suspense. He paused, looked back, raised his hand, dropped the blanket. The signal!

A mad dash and scramble followed. To an onlooker it would have seemed pandemonium; but the trained meat-hunters were methodically selecting their prey, dropping them, while the main body of warriors kept the herd from escaping.

At last the hunt was over. Dead bison dotted the prairie on all sides. The ponies, no longer excited, proudly conscious of the part they had played in the slaughter, were grazing quietly. The hungry hunters were busy skinning and cutting, kindling fires, broiling steaks, roasting buffalo-tongues.

Something of the intense excitement of a buffalo chase is revealed in Frémont's description of his hunt with Kit Carson, soon after they left the Santa Fé Trail and turned off toward the foothills in 1842:

"As we were riding quietly along the bank a grand herd of buffalo, some seven or eight hundred in number, came crowding up from the river where they had been to drink, and commenced crossing the plain slowly, eating as they went. It was too fine a prospect for a chase to be lost; and halting for a few moments the hunters were brought up and saddled, and Kit Carson, Maxwell and I started together.

"They were now somewhat less than a half-mile distant, and we rode easily along until within about three hundred yards, when a sudden agitation, a wavering in the band, and a galloping to and fro of some which were scattered along the skirts gave us the intimation that we were discovered. We started together at a hard gallop, riding steadily abreast of each other, and here the interest of the chase became so engrossingly intense that we were sensible of nothing else. We were now closing upon them rapidly.

"A crowd of bulls, as usual, brought up the rear, and every now and then some of them faced about, and then dashed on after the band a short distance, and turned and looked again, as if more than half inclined to stand and fight. In a few moments, however, during which we

had been quickening our pace, the rout was universal, and we were going over the ground like a hurricane. When at thirty yards, we gave the usual shout, the hunter's *pas de charge,* and broke into the herd.

"We entered on the side, the mass giving way in every direction in their heedless course. Many of the bulls, less active and less fleet than the cows, paying no attention to the ground and occupied solely with the hunter, were precipitated to the earth with great force, rolling over and over with the violence of the shock, and hardly distinguishable in the dust. We separated on entering the herd, each singling out his game.

"My horse was a trained hunter. With his eyes flashing and the foam flying from his mouth, he sprang on after the cow like a tiger. In a few moments he brought me alongside of her; and rising in the stirrups I fired at the distance of a yard, the ball entering at the termination of the long hair and passing near the heart. She fell headlong; and checking my horse I looked around for my companions. At a little distance Kit was on the ground, engaged in tying his horse to the horns of a cow which he was preparing to cut up; and among the scattered

herds at some distance below I caught a glimpse of Maxwell.

"Nearer, and between me and the hills towards which they were directing their course, was the body of the herd, and giving my horse the rein we dashed after them. A thick cloud of dust hung upon their rear, which filled my mouth and eyes and nearly smothered me. In the midst of this I could see nothing, and the buffalo were not distinguishable until within thirty feet. They crowded together more densely still, as I came upon them, and rushed along in such a compact body that I could not obtain an entrance—the horse almost leaping upon them.

"In a few moments the mass divided to right and left, the horns clattering with a noise heard above everything else, and my horse darted into the opening. Five or six bulls charged on us as we dashed along the line, but were left far behind; and singling out a cow, I gave her my fire, but struck too high. She gave a tremendous leap and scoured on swifter than before. I reined up my horse, and the band swept on like a torrent and left the place quiet and clear."

General Custer, although a hero of the Civil War and a veteran Indian fighter, claimed that

his narrowest escape came in his first buffalo hunt.

It was during Hancock's expedition. Custer and his Seventh Cavalry were in pursuit of the Cheyennes and Sioux. The soldiers had set out at daylight; but the Indian ponies were swifter than the heavy cavalry horses, and the warriors had several hours' start.

The long column of cavalry rode on and on over the prairie, the horses kicking up a cloud of dust. General Custer, riding at the head of his troops, saw off to one side a small herd of antelope. He had with him some English greyhounds, of which he was very proud. Here would be a chance to test their speed with that of the fleetest of creatures, the plains antelope. He knew that the Indians were miles ahead, and there was no danger of a fight. He could safely leave the column. With his fine, thoroughbred horse, he could swiftly overtake the troops.

Ordering his men to continue the march, he called his greyhounds and set off after the antelope. He had not galloped far before the dogs caught sight of the game, and the chase was on. The startled antelope bounded away down a ravine, the dogs flying at their heels, Custer's excited horse skimming over the prairie to keep

them in sight. On and on they flew, the dogs never really having a chance, the antelope running easily, gracefully, swiftly. One by one the greyhounds were winded and gave up the chase.

Custer pulled up his horse, then, ready to return to the column. As he scanned the prairie with his field-glass he saw, about a mile away, a large, dark-looking object grazing quietly. It was a buffalo; the first wild buffalo he had ever seen. His blood was still pounding from the excitement of the chase. And ever since he had been on the plains he had wanted to hunt buffalo. Here was too good a chance to miss.

Calling to the greyhounds to follow him, he rode down into a ravine which would take him close to the buffalo without his being seen. He went slowly, to permit his horse to get into condition for a second dash. When he emerged from the ravine, the buffalo had moved on; and while he was still several yards from it, the alert animal saw him. With head down and tail up, it went tearing across the prairie in a frantic dash for its life.

Custer's horse flew after it. In the intense excitement of the chase all sense of distance was lost. Even the greyhounds, unable to keep up the mad speed, were left far behind. But at last

the fleet horse drew abreast of the buffalo bull. Custer had held his revolver in his hand from the moment the race began.

"Repeatedly," says he, "could I have placed the muzzle against the shaggy body of the huge beast by whose side I fairly yelled with excitement and delight, yet each time would I withdraw the weapon, as if to prolong the enjoyment of the race. Still we sped over the springy turf, the high breeding and mettle of my horse being plainly visible over that of the huge beast that struggled by his side. Mile after mile was traversed in this way, until the rate and distance began to tell perceptibly on the bison, whose protruding tongue and labored breathing plainly betrayed his distress.

"Determined to end the chase and bring down my game, I again placed the muzzle of the revolver close to the body of the buffalo, when, as if divining my intention and feeling his inability to escape by flight, he suddenly determined to fight, and at once wheeled, as only a buffalo can, to gore my horse. So sudden was this movement, and so sudden was the corresponding veering of my horse to avoid the attack, that to retain my control over him I hastily brought up my pistol hand to the assistance of the other.

Unfortunately, as I did so, my finger in the excitement of the occasion pressed the trigger, discharged the pistol, and sent the fatal ball into the very brain of the noble animal I rode. Running at full speed, he fell dead in the course of his leap. Quick as thought, I disengaged myself from the stirrups and found myself whirling through the air over and beyond the head of my horse. My only thought was, 'What will the buffalo do with me?' "

The buffalo, astonished at this strange proceeding, yet somehow sensing that there was still danger from the gun, instead of goring the enemy to death, quickly made its escape.

Custer picked himself up, bruised and sore, thankful that no bones were broken, but fully realizing his danger. His horse lay dead. He was alone in the heart of the Indian country, with hostile tribes known to be in the vicinity. How far away his cavalrymen were, or in what direction, he had no idea. While he was scanning the plain, wondering whether he should start off to the north or the south, to the east or the west, two of his dogs came up. They seemed to know at once that he was in trouble. They looked at the dead horse, then at him. Then, whining anxiously, they set out toward the south-

east, looking back, their eyes telling him to follow.

When the intelligent greyhounds had led him three or four miles, he saw, far off across the plain, a column of dust arising. He watched it intently, knowing that it could mean only one of three things—the cavalry, Indians, or buffaloes. Through his field-glass he was able to discern the outline of mounted men, scarcely distinguishable through the dust; that eliminated buffaloes, but left the terrible possibility of Indians. Luckily, a nearby ravine offered concealment, and there he crouched with the two dogs, anxiously watching the dust-cloud approach.

Then, to his relief, Custer saw the well-loved guidon waving proudly above the dust. It was his own Seventh Cavalry!

While this was Custer's first buffalo, a few weeks later the spring migration came, and then hundreds of thousands of them passed his way. Colonel Inman claims that in 1868 he and General Custer rode for three consecutive days through one continuous herd "which must have contained millions."

In the spring of 1871 General Dodge drove along the Old Santa Fé Trail from Fort Zarah

to Fort Larned, and for at least twenty-five miles of the distance he was in the midst of buffalo. "The whole country was one mass of buffalo, apparently, and it was only when actually among them that the seemingly solid body was seen to be an agglomeration of countless herds of from fifty to two hundred animals." To give some indication of the unbelievable number in the spring migration, this authority on the buffalo says that some years they traveled northward in one immense column from twenty to fifty miles in width and of unknown depth from front to rear; in other years there were several parallel columns, spread out over a width of a hundred miles or more. Another man says that he traveled for one hundred and twenty miles through an almost continuous herd.

And then the great slaughter came. Some one in the East discovered that buffalo-hides were excellent for many uses. A sudden and enormous market for them developed. The demand was far greater than the supply; and the prairie turned into a vast slaughter-yard, with hundreds of thousands of buffaloes being killed for their hides alone. There was also a market for the tongues and, in a smaller way, for the meat; but it was the hides which lured an army of amateur

hunters, as well as the old frontiersmen, to stalking and killing, carrying off the hides and leaving the carcases where they fell.

"In some places," says a plainsman, "one could walk all day long on the dead bodies of the buffaloes killed by the hide-hunters without stepping off them to the ground." A traveler on the Old Santa Fé Trail between Cow Creek and the Cimarron Crossing passed an almost continuous line of carcases and bleaching bones; for hunters' camps were established all along the Arkansas River and the buffaloes shot down when they came night and morning to drink.

This wholesale slaughter was augmented by tourists and travelers on the railroads across the prairie. They shot ruthlessly from car windows merely for the thrill, the new experience, of killing a buffalo. As soon as a herd was sighted, within rifle-range, the train slackened its pace, that its patrons might have this sport; then, without stopping, it went rushing on, leaving a wake of wounded and dead animals where the splendid herd had been. Thousands of buffaloes were killed in this way, with not even the hides being taken.

And so the end of the American bison came speedily. Only a few scattered herds were to

be seen along the Santa Fé Trail when, in 1880, the Trail itself came to an end as a highway for commerce. In that year the last link of the railroad was completed, and no longer was there need for freight caravans or mail stages to go lumbering over the long slow route.

The Old Santa Fé Trail—the colorful trail of danger and daring and exciting adventure—was at an end. The buffaloes were fast disappearing. Stagecoach bandits sought other fields. The Indians had been pushed back to their reservations—no more were resounding war-cries to be heard, nor war-paint and battle-feathers to be seen.

The romantic days were gone.